171.

Mrs. HANNAH HALLIDAY's LETTER TO JOHN MADDOX, Esq;

One of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of *Somerset*.

BEING

A Calm REMONSTRANCE with the said JOHN MADDOX, concerning the cruel Persecution lately carried on, under the Form of Law, against her the said *Hannah Halliday*, *Jane Taylor*, *Sarah Seagram*, and their Brethren, on account of their assembling together to worship God, agreeable to the Dictates of their own Consciences, the fundamental Principles of Protestantism, the Laws of Christianity, and of this Kingdom.

As Fierceness and Cruelty is a sure Indication of a Coward, so Gentleness and Humanity are usually Arguments of a great and generous Mind.

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W. Musgrave.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the WORSHIPFUL

JOHN MADDOX, Esq;

SIR,

§ 1. I KNOW not how I can better adapt the Introduction of this Epistle, to my Design in the subsequent Parts of it, than by offering to your Consideration, the Observation of a great King, and which is yet more, of an eminent Saint of old; namely, "That the Righteous are bold as a Lion." This Animating, this exhilerating Truth, I conceive I have experienced to have been verified in my Self.

§ 2. Surely the Heart of a Lion was requisite to the sustaining the Hardships you were pleased to impose upon me, with a Temper becoming my Character as a *Christian*; amidst the many discouraging Circumstances, with which I was all the while surrounded; a Woman! A Woman of an infirm and tender Constitution! in low Circumstances, and destitute of Succour, or Advice, from powerful Friends or wealthy Relations. But thanks be to God,

under Theſe, and many other dejecting Conſiderations, to which human Nature in common is incident, I was furniſh'd with Fortitude, to follow thoſe in Tribulation, who thro' Faith and Patience now inherit the Promiſes.----And 'tis with a very peculiar Satisfaction, a Pleaſure! which a Stranger intermeddleth not with, that I frequently recount to my Self thoſe very Afflictions, which at the Time of undergoing them, I fear'd, I ſhould have ſunk under. The Spring of all which ſpiritual Satisfaction and Pleaſure is, that I know in whom I truſted! Seeing the good Providence of him, in whom all my Affiance was placed, graciouſly ſupported me in the Day of Tryal. So that tho' I have been experimentally taught to underſtand, that no Affliction for the preſent is joyous, but grievous; yet I am alſo enabled to declare in the reviving Words of St. *Paul*, that afterwards it yeildeth the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs.

§ 3. 'Tis true indeed, notwithſtanding this, I really think the Caſe of the haughty Inflictor of unmerited Miſeries on his poor Neighbours, to be truly lamentable: For tho' tis evidently the Will of God, that pious Perſons ſhould patiently endure the Evils of the preſent Life, with which in infinite Wiſdom, he ſees meet that they ſhould be excercis'd; and that in ſo doing, they ſhould make a Virtue of Neceſſity; and as it were extract Honey with the Bee, from poiſonous Vegetables; yet the Nature of Things remains unaltered. Vice! is Vice, whatever virtuous Uſe may be made of even Vice itſelf, by virtuous Perſons. And the dreadful Conſequences of Vice, will inevitably

evitably overtake the unhappy Agent, if not timely warded off by true and unfeign'd Repentance.

§ 4. Now 'tis very poſſible, Sir, that tho' you may readily admit the Truth of this Obſervation in General, yet you may as readily conclude, it does not at all affect you in particular. You may think it ſufficient to reply, that if your poor Neighbours will violate the Law, they ought to feel the Effects of their Imprudence, their Miſeries are merited; and the civil Magiſtrate would be culpable, in omitting to take Cognizance of the Violation of the Law; and muſt conſequently be Praiſe worthy in inflicting the Puniſhments of the Law on Offenders.

§ 5. Here, Sir, you will pardon me, if I enter into the Merits of the Cauſe with you, by the Iſſue of which it may poſſibly appear, that the Obſervation I have made in the third Section, is not only true in General, but affects you in particular, and that you unhappily impoſe on yourſelf by groſs Sophiſtry.—The Civil Law, I readily grant with you ought duly to be regarded; but if the Civil Law itſelf, be duly framed, and is what it ought to be, can it interfere with the ſuperior Law of Conſcience? This, Sir, is the Original Law of God to the whole World. And the Civil Laws of particular Nations, are all originally intended to be ultimately ſubſervient to it. Theſe all are or ought to be, but ſo many ſeveral Means to this univerſal End. The Law of Conſcience is inward, engraved on the Tables of the Heart, and is only to to be read there by its reſpective Poſſeſſor. Its Operations are primarily all ſecret, and inviſible to others; and Obedi-

ence, or Diſobedience, to its righteous Injunctions, are manifeſt to others only, by its ſecondary viſible Conſequences. Now this univerſal Law of God to, and in, every Man, is to every one as being a free Agent: And it is too notorious, that we are frequently diſpos'd to gratify our Senſes, (maugre all the repeated Remonſtrances of our Conſciences to the contrary) to an inordinate Degree. Sin is of a hardening Nature! and the Sinner that can diſregard the Upbraidings of his own Conſcience, uſually pays but little Deference to the conſcientious Reproofs of others. So that tho' Conſcience teaches Reverence to Almighty God, if the immediate Subject of it determines to diſobey it, it is not long that Modeſty retains its natural Power over him, but the Man becomes abandon'd to Impudence, and he proclaims his Irreverence openly by publickly taking the Name of the Lord in vain. Tho' Conſcience enjoins the Practice of Sobriety, Temperance, Juſtice, Chaſtity, and Mercy, if the Man determines to diſregard its Injunctions, it is not long, that the Exhortations of Friends, or Perſwaſions, and Intreaties of Relations, will be able to avail; but he grows ſo audacious in his Iniquities, as to practiſe them in the Face of the Sun, and to deſpiſe the Reproaches of Men. Now 'tis this Contempt of the internal Law of Conſcience, and of that external Law of Civility to others, that induces the Neceſſity of Penal Laws, for the Violation of moral Ones. Penal Laws, then, have only, naturally, Immorality for its Object. Immorality open! obviouſly ſcandlaous! and juſtly offenſive, becauſe injurious to others, and when

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ever Penal Laws have Matters relative purely to Religion in View they intirely miſtake their Object, are unnatural; a manifeſt Perverſion of the Nature and End of Civil Laws; and the Application of them, to any ſuch unnatural Purpoſe, is groſly vicious and irreligious in it ſelf, in any Perſon whatſoever that is guilty of it, let his Pretext for it be what it will.

§ 6. But I would not reſt in barely proving it to you from Reaſon, and the Nature of Things; which will convince the indifferent By-ſtander, if he examines the Matter impartially, tho' it ſhould have no Manner of Effect on you. But 'tis your Conviction, likewiſe your Good, that I would here alſo particularly have in View. *Come then*, and let us reaſon together, concerning your Behaviour towards me, under the ſpecious Pretext of Law! You would have it thought then, that your rigorous Procedure with me, was the regular Execution of the Civil Laws: You would have it thought ſo by others, but why? It is becauſe you really think ſo yourſelf; ſpeak out. Honeſtly ſay for your ſelf: And I dare ſay we ſhall ſoon be convinc'd to the contrary. Conſcience when impartially appeal'd to, Sir, is a very candid Reſolver of Doubts. And whenever we have the Determination of Conſcience in our Favour, the manly, the rational Pleaſure it creates within us is cuſtomarily almoſt ineffable. And is this now, the Caſe indeed with you Sir? I doubt not. I cant think that the Perſon who uſurps Authority over the Rights of Conſcience in another, the Perſon who merely on Account of Religion, and therefore cauſeleſly, deprives his Neighbour of his Liberty, by ſubjecting him to the

numerous Infelicities of a Priſon, (ſuch for Inſtance, Reproach, Hunger, Cold, tedious, painful, and forc'd Journeys under the Care of Ruffians *&c.*) can upon cool Reflection, derive any manly Satisfaction from ſuch a Procedure. But however, if reading, or hearing, the Narrative of the Sufferings you have occaſion'd me, from me the helpleſs, and, as I conceive, injured Sufferer, can afford you any Sort of Pleaſure, I ſhall neither deprive you of it, nor envy you in the Enjoyment of it; but ſhall proceed, ingenuouſly, and fairly, to recount them to you, in Hopes that a ſedate After-reflection, upon them may have its proper and deſired Effect on you. And with the farther View that the impartial World may judge between us, and that thoſe deteſtable Practices, deteſtable as we are Human, and not leſs ſo as Chriſtians, of injuring one another when it is in our Power merely on Account of our different Sentiments of Religion, and Modes, and Forms, of external Worſhip, may be brought into that general Diſgrace and Contempt, which, upon all genuine Principles of Reaſon and Religion, they naturally deſerve.

§ 7. Some time before *Michalmas* 1751, I was attending, with others of my Friends on an Exhorter of our Perſwaſion, in an Houſe licenſed to diſſenting *Proteſtants* called *Baptiſts*; which Houſe was taken of the * Gentlewoman whoſe it is, (and who took out a Licence for it) by Siſter *Sarah Seagram*, for us to worſhip God in occaſionally, without given Offence to, or receiving Moleſtation from others; when notwithſtanding this Precaution, we found ourſelves diſ-

* Mrs. *Sarah Collins.*

diſappointed, our Hopes of enjoying Peace, and that Serenity and Compoſure of Mind which is, as it were eſſential to Edification, in the Worſhip of God defeated, and we ourſelves inſulted and abuſed, by *John Sheppard*, the Tything-man of *Frome*, and one *Richard Jenkins*. Theſe Men having been but a very ſmall Time in the Room, began to diſturb both the Miniſter and the Congregration, by a ſcandalouſly, rude, and vulgar Addreſs to the Miniſter, which was immediately ſucceeded by profane Curſing and Swearing, and roaring out obſcene Songs; all which was very ſhocking to hear, and which gave a general, and juſt Concern, to every pious Perſon preſent. A Conduct this, Sir! the bare Relation of which, methinks, ſhould be ſufficient, to excite Indignation and Horror, even in your Breaſt, when you ſhall be pleaſed to conſider, that if it ſhould indeed prove true, that we were *Enthuſiaſts*, we were *ſincere*; and if we were *miſtaken*, we were *honeſt*, and deſired to worſhip God, *in Spirit and in Truth*. And can it appear to you, Sir, to be fit, that a Congregation of *reaſonable Beings*, ſhould be thus moleſted in their religious Worſhip of God, by *notorious Libertines*, with *Oaths* and *Curſes*, and *nauſeous Debauchery?* If it ſhould prove true, that we were in the *Wrong in any Reſpect*, was this a *Method*, in *any Reſpect* proper to ſet us *Right?* Was this a *Method* proper to reduce us to *Reaſon?* Which think you in the Sight of God, or any ſober Judge whatſoever, among Men, was the greateſt Crime, our worſhipping God, tho' in Simplicity, yet (we truſt) in godly Sincerity; or theſe Perſons interrupting us in

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ſuch our Worſhip, in the inhuman, and more than brutiſh Manner, above deſcribed? If the former, *in your impartial Judgment*, condeſcend but to aſſign your Reaſons for it, it ſhall be fairly attended to, and all its native Force allow'd it: If the latter, how came we to be puniſhed? How came we to be purſued with Confiſcation of Goods, and Impriſonment, and theſe Libertines ſuffer'd to go off with Impunity? In ſhort, Sir, what have *ſuch Perſons* at all to do with different Sentiments in ſpeculative Chriſtianity? or regulating the Modes of Chriſtian Worſhip? *Perſons* who are not only groſsly ignorant of all *Religion*, but by their open and daily flagitious Enormities, are a Diſgrace to their Species, and the very Name of Man! Methinks, Sir, it ſhould have been a Conduct more becoming your Station in the Commonwealth, and your Character as a Chriſtian, and Member of the Church of *England*, to have vigorouſly diſcountenanced a Spirit of Mobbing and Tumult, Inſurrection, Profaneneſs and groſs Irreligion, by ſuch legal Arguments, as when but duly apply'd, have ſometimes had their deſired Effect, where thoſe milder ones of *Ratiocination* and *Perſwaſion* have unhappily failed. The due Application of which Species of Argumentation, with the *profligate* and *abandon'd* Part of Mankind, is intruſted *to you* by the Legiſlature, in order, if poſſible, to *reclaim them*, and recover them to a Senſe of their Duty, as *Members of civil Society*. The Exerciſe of your Authority in this Manner, in order to effect thoſe *ſalutary Purpoſes*, the Tranquillity of the State in general, and the Reformation of Offenders not abſolutely incorrigible in particular, ſeems

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to me to be plainly imply'd in your very *Title*, or the Name of your Office, to wit, *a Juſtice of the Peace*, and which too, methinks, ſeems likewiſe to imply an *Obligation*, on the Gentlemen who aſſume that Character, in *Juſtice* to reſtore *Peace* to thoſe who are violently and unjuſtly deprived of it, and more eſpecially if they are deprived of it by *Mobbing and Outrage*. This being a Method of Procedure, which if but the leaſt connived at, when firſt attempted, has been ſometimes found to ſpread itſelf among the diſſolute Populace, like an epidemical Diſeaſe, to the very great Prejudice of the Peace of the State, and which to, has required the Application of very diſagreeable Remedies to effect a Cure; but if in Reaſoning on *Matters of State*, I ſhould happen to be in ſome Points miſtaken, your Worſhip will pleaſe to remember my *Sex*, and aſcribe it to the Want of *Cultivation in the Underſtanding of a Woman*.

§ 8. But whether you will deem me erroneous or not, in Matters of Policy; and the Meaſures proper for you to have taken, with *thoſe* who were no way concern'd to *redreſs Errors* in Matters of Religion on any Pretence whatſoever, being not only ignorant of, but the avow'd Enemies to *Religion*; by wicked Works. I think I cannot be *much* miſtaken with regard to your Behaviour towards *us*, even upon the Suppoſition that you were *certain beyond all Doubt*, that we were fallen into an Error. The Rule preſcribed by the Apoſtle, for the Regulation of the Conduct of Chriſtians, one towards another on this Head, is clear and expreſs, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the *Spirit of Meekneſs*. And methinks I

ſhould

ſhould *not* be miſtaken, when I affirm, that *Confiſcation of Goods, and Impriſonment of Perſons, on Account of involuntary Errors of Faith*, have no natural Alliance to the *genuine Import* of the Term *Meekneſs*. The gentle, the tender, the attracting Phraſe *Spirit of Meekneſs*, can never in any natural Conſtruction certainly imply, depriving the Erroneous of their Property, their Liberty, their Peace, their external Reputation, ſurely all this may eaſily be perceived by a Woman! *however your Worſhip came to miſtake it.* And ſince I find it is poſſible, for the Reaſoning, the ſtronger Sex, ſo *egregiouſly* to miſtake, in ſo *material a Point* of Practice; yea, for a Gentleman of your *Learning*, *celebrated Senſe*, *elevated Station*, and particular Circumſtances, to dwell ſo much, on *intereſting* Points of Law, as to run Counter in Practice, (on Occaſion) in ſo *well adjuſted* and *plain* a Point of practical Religion; I am really well ſatisfy'd with being a Woman; and greatly prefer the Character of being a *devout Perſon* of the *devout Sex*, to the being a miſtaken Juſtice of Peace of the reaſoning Kind, tho' my Character ſhould be decorated with the wordy Ornaments *Smart*, *Keen*, *Penetrating*, *Subtle* and *Indefatigable*: Becauſe 'tis poſſible, if with all theſe Qualifications I ſhould yet be void of the Wiſdom of modelling my Conduct, by the plaineſt Rules of practical Religion towards my fellow Chriſtians, that I might be *indefatigable in doing Miſchief*; and in a juſt Proportion to my *Penetration* and *Subtilty*, I might occaſion others to *ſmart* whom *God will applaud!* and at the ſame Time omit to apply the *keen Edge* of my Reſentment to the proper Objects of it.

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§ 9. But that I may not fail of convincing you, the *keen Edge* of your Reſentment was ſomehow or other made to glance off from the proper Objects of it, in the preſent Caſe; I will beg Leave to proceed in my Hiſtory. I have already inform'd you, Sir, of the Method taken by your *worthy* Peace-Officer, and his no leſs worthy Friend, to interrupt us in our Worſhip, and which, methinks, ſhould appear to every conſiderate Reader, to be a Conduct more ſuitable to the Character of red-hot Meſſengers, immediately diſpatch'd from the *infernal Regions*, than a *Peace-Officer*, (and his Friend) who had been, but a very little Time before, to wait on one of his Maſters. After they had gone thus far then in the Accompliſhment of their Deſign, *(not to ſay Order)* they proceeded to abuſe both Preacher and Hearers, till they had converted our Worſhip of God into a Scene of Hurry and Confuſion, and that ſuch an one too, as (by Words) I am unable to deſcribe. Amidſt this general Conſternation, one of them had the Impudence to aſcend the Deſk, and there not only affronted the Miniſter, with intolerable *Ribaldry*, but in a *daring* and *impious* Manner, made a *mock Preaching* himſelf! Whilſt I am exhibiting this ſhocking Part of the ſable *Scene* to you, methinks I ſcarce know how to avoid crying out, with a * late Writer on this ſame melancholly Subject, What Sort of Chriſtians muſt they be! who have no more Reverence for Chriſtian Worſhip, or Senſe of the immediate Inſpection of God, the infinitely glorious Object of it, than to interrupt a Chriſtian Society in their Worſhip, by undeſerved Abuſes,

* Author of *Mercy for* Methodiſts, *Page* 26.

ſcandalous

ſcandalous and opprobious Names, horrid Oaths and Curſes, wild Tumult, and confus'd Uproar? And what Sort of Chriſtians muſt they be, who can countenance, encourage, or prompt thoſe other Miſcreants ſo to do, and wiſh to have their fellow Chriſtians laugh'd to Scorn by others, tho' they would not appear openly to do it themſelves?

This *impious Wretch*, Sir, no one oppoſed. fearing it might be giving you, and your *reverend Brethren*, which were the other Conſtituents of the Triumverate, the Opportunity we were apprehenſive you all wanted, of a Colour to perſecute us under, the Form of Law.

§ 10. At length the Ruffian thought proper to deſcend from the Deſk he had juſt defiled with his impious Breath, and attempted to pull it down, with all the Fury of a Commiſſary from the Prince of Darkneſs. Seeing this, I, and two or three more of my Siſters, endeavour'd to defend it; upon which, the Miniſter, with great Concern, left the Room; but I, and others of his Hearers, thought it adviſeable to ſtay, hoping to ſee the Ruffians leave it; the Conſequence of which was, (beſides repeated Vollies of Oaths and Curſes) *Jenkins* full of Rage, threw me down in the Room, and that with ſuch Violence, as to bruiſe and injure me much by it; all which my Huſband forbore to reſent, prudently conſidering even a juſt Defence of his Wife, under ſuch Circumſtances, would very probably have been ſo miſrepreſented, as to furniſh ſome Sort of *Colour* to treat *him*, as ſoon afterwards you did his Wife, without any Colour at all, as I humbly apprehend; for notwithſtanding all the Care that was taken by us

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to avoid giving Offence, and patiently to endure repeated Aſſaults, and grievous Abuſes, both in Words and Actions, we were ſummon'd to appear before you, and the prieſtly Juſtices juſt refer'd to; we obey'd. When the Queſtion put to us was, Whether we intended to perſiſt in that unlawful Way of aſſembling ourſelves together? To which we ſubmiſſively reply'd, in Words to this Effect, That we apprehended the Manner in wich we aſſembled was, in itſelf, perfectly inoffenſive, as all we intended by it was our Edification in Religion and Virtue, and to increaſe in the Knowledge of God our Saviour, and ſurely for Chriſtians who profeſs'd to make the Bible the Rule of their Faith and Manners, to aſſemble together, in a peaceable and inoffenſive Manner, in order to theſe great and ſalutary Purpoſes, could never be inconſiſtent with the Laws of Reaſon or Chriſtianity, and therefore we hoped it was not inconſiſtent with the Laws of our Country, which was *nominally*, at leaſt, both *Chriſtian* and *Proteſtant*; and as we had none but the beſt of Ends in View, we humbly hoped we ſhould not be ſurpriſed into a *Renuntiation* of the *Means, whilſt Life and Reaſon was vouchſafed us.* Upon which, with a *Tone* that beſpoke you to be in a Temper advanced a Degree or two above the *Laodicean Size*, you order'd us down Stairs.

§ 11. Whilſt we were executing your Order, I thought (as I had no Opportunity of doing it before) I would return and offer to your Worſhip's Conſideration, the barbarous Treatment I received from *Jenkins*, which I flatter'd myſelf, you *could not* but look upon as *culpable*

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on a civil Account, and would puniſh as ſuch, apart from all Reſentment you might have imbibed againſt me, *(cauſeleſsly)* on a religious Account; but to my great Diſappointment, and no leſs Surprize, inſtead of this, you eagerly aſked of him, What he had to ſay againſt me? And immediately upon ſo unexpected, ſo unaccountable an Interrogation, he was ſuffered to ſwear againſt me, and an old Woman of about threeſcore and ten, for aſſaulting him and tearing his Shirt; which ridiculous Falſhood was, with your Worſhip, however, a Pretence ſufficient to order our Mittamus to be made directly. This done, we were forthwith ſent down Stairs, under Cuſtody, and there kept, 'till 'twas too late to ſend us to *Bridewell* for that Day; it being near Six in the Evening, when we were firſt inform'd by our Guard, *(Sheppard* and *Jenkins*, the very Perſons who had ſo frequently mobb'd, inſulted and abuſed us*)* that we muſt repair to the Guard-Houſe for that Night; which we actually did, and were all the Way not only made a Jeſt of by them, but a publick gazing Stock to others, thro' the Town, as tho' we had been the moſt notorious and abandon'd Malefactors. When we arrived at the honourable Place of Reſidence firſt aſſign'd us by your Worſhip, the Mob was ſo great that I feared they would have broke in upon us.

§ 12. After their Diſperſion, I had here a fair Opportunity of calling to Mind the great Examples of Patience, and long Suffering for well-doing, who had gone before me, my *dear Saviour*, his *Apoſtles*, and a long but glorious Catalogue of *primitive Chriſtians*; but in my Caſe, there appear'd to me to be *one Circumſtance* which

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was indeed an affecting and *melancholly one*; my Sufferings were occasion'd, not like theirs, by *declar'd Enemies*, but *profess'd Friends* to Christianity; yea, by the *Pastors* and *Members of a reform'd Church in a Protestant State*. But whatever Difference there was in the Profession of our Persecutors, the Persecuted, I considered, agreed in this, that they suffer'd Persecution for the Sake of *a good Conscience*. Here then it was, that I first began to taste that peculiar kind of Pleasure, which flows in upon the devout Mind, from suffering on Account of Religion.

The *Pleasure* I here experienced, was abundantly sufficient to put a lasting Period, to my Wonder, at the *Firmness* and *Constancy* with which my Predecessors in Tribulation, had persevered to the End of their good Fight of Faith, and consequently to confirm me in my Resolution to copy after them, in manifesting my Love to my Lord, by *my* Sufferings.

§ 13. The next Day was the *Sabbath*, in which I and my aged Sister were convey'd to *Bridewell*, under Charge of those who triumph'd in our Abasement; those *Brutes* in the *Shape* of Men, who, from no Principle but that of a *Love to Wickedness*, had so frequently interrupted us in sanctifying former *Sabbaths* to the Lord, according to our Consciences.

When we arrived at *Shepton*, the Brethren here joyfully administered to us of their good Things, both Temporal and Spiritual, and by joining with us, as Opportunity offer'd, *in Prayer and Praise*, frequently converted a *Prison* into a *Temple*, and a Place of Confinement to a Place of Enlargement of Soul, in Love to our common Lord. But this pleasing Scene

was but of ſhort Duration, and we were ſoon acquainted by the Keeper with his Orders from *Frome*, to admit of no more ſuch Viſits. But what an unſpeakable Priviledge is it, to be of the Number of truly religious Perſons, in the Day of external Adverſity, when ſuch are either *voluntarily* or *accidentally* forſaken by Father or Mother, by Friends or Relations; then is the Time that the ſovereign Lord of the Univerſe makes choice of, to take them up, to ſpeak Peace to their Conſciences, and diffuſe that Joy and Conſolation throughout their Souls, which it is not in the Power of Man to deprive them of.

§ 14. Day and Night had now ſucceeded each other, till that long'd-for Period was arrived, in which we were to be removed from hence, in order to *our Trial for no Crime*, upon which we were brought out of *Bridewell*, like *Malefactors*, with many that really were ſo; and *Oh*, how deplorable is the Caſe of ſuch! deſtitute of Friends, full of dreadful Expectations, and which is worſt of all, condemned beyond all Reprieve, to undergo the Racks and Tortures of a guilty and upbraiding Conſcience. With ſuch Companions we now enter on our Journey to *Taunton*, the Place appointed for holding the general Quarter Seſſions, and on the Evening reach'd *Bridgewater-Bridewell*, in our Way. Thus were we moved from Priſon to Priſon, whilſt we enjoy'd full Liberty within. In this *Bridewell* I and my aged Siſter were done the Favour of a Lodging, *when* our Keeper would ſuffer us to retire, (not only) upon Condition of paying for it, but upon the further very ſingular Condition, of paying likewiſe for a Lodging for a

Girl,

Girl, who was impriſon'd for Theft: Such was Mr. *Danvers*'s Eſteem for her. From hence we proceeded to *Taunton*, where, after a tedious Journey, we arrived, cold, hungry, weary and wet, to the ungrateful Refreſhment of a gloomy Priſon.

§15. Bed-Time ſoon approach'd, and we having a Bed agreed for by certain affectionate Brethren there, we retired to it, in an uncomfortable Condition. A Man conducted us to our Room, which, as ſoon as ever we had enter'd, he locked upon us; we begg'd the Favour of him to light the Candle, that we might diſcover in what Part of it the Bed was; but this ſmall Favour was refus'd us, with the too cuſtomary Farewel of theſe People, Find it yourſelves and be d—d. Groping after the Bed in the Dark, my aged Siſter ſtumbled on a Ring, which Priſoners are occaſionally confin'd by; but thro' Mercy receiv'd no other Harm by the Fall than the Fright. I ſoon diſcover'd we were in a Room adorn'd with the cuſtomary Lights of thoſe gloomy Habitations, by running my Hand thro' *one of them*, and grating it againſt one of its ſable Bars, When we found our Bed, we ſoon experienced it, to be *diſagreeable enough*; for my Part, I ſat up in it, with my Cloak about my Shoulders, for moſt Part of the Night, and enjoy'd no other Reſt, but what an applauding Conſcience afforded me.

§16. At the uſual Time for the *Malefactors* appearing before the Bench, we were conducted to the Hall with them, and *there*, with *them*, placed in one common Coop. This Honour was for three Days ſucceſſively confer'd on us. But the Honour of taking our Trial we (like ſilly Wo-

men as we were) ſuffer'd ourſelves to be perſwaded out of. One of the * Juſtices vouchſafing to adviſe us, as it were in Friendſhip to us, to make up the Matter with the Man on whoſe Complaint we were committed, who (he ſaid) was ready to ſign a Releaſe; and urged it as a Motive of *Weight*, that the Chairman was very ſevere upon the *Methodiſts*. This Stratagem ſucceeded to your Wiſh; we weak Women! deſtitute of Friends, under Impriſonment, and ſought to by a worthy Juſtice of Peace, to *purſue Meaſures which tended to Peace* and a Releaſe from Confinement in a Priſon! we agreed. To what? why, Sir, to be freely releaſed by a Perſon we had never offended, from all Injuries done him, and Trepaſſes committed againſt him, in the following, very ſignificant Form.

Copy of JENKINS's Releaſe *&c.*

KNOW all Men by theſe Preſents that I *Richard Jenkins*, of *Frome* in the County of *Somerſet*, *Peruke-maker* have remiſed, releaſed, and for ever quit claimed, and by theſe Preſents do remiſe, releaſe, and for ever quit claim unto *Jane Taylor*, Widow, and *Hannah Halliday*, the Wife of *Iſaac Halliday* both of *Frome*, aforeſaid, their Heirs, Executors and Adminiſtrators, all and all Manner of Action and Actions, Cauſe and Cauſes, of Action, Suits, Bills, Bonds, Writings Obligatory, Debts, Dues, Duties, Accompts, Sum and Sums of Money, Judgments, Executions, Extents, Quarrels, Controverſies, Treſpaſſes, Damages and Demands whatſoever, both in Law and Equity, or otherwiſe howſoever

* *John Halliday*. Eſq;

ver which againſt the ſaid *Jane Taylor*, and *Hannah Halliday* I ever had, and which I my Heirs, Executors or Adminiſtrators, ſhall or may hereafter have Claim, Challenge or Demand, for or by Reaſon or Means of any Matter, Cauſe or Thing whatſoever, from the Beginning of the World to the Day of the Date of theſe Preſents. In witneſs wherefore I have hereunto ſet my Hand and Seal, the tenth Day of *October* in the twenty fifth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *George* the Second, and in the Year of our Lord one Thouſand ſeven Hundred and fifty one.

Seal'd and Delivered,
in the preſence of,
(no Body)

Richard Jenkins.

§ 17. Thus Sir, by this *ſham* Agreement, and Releaſe from *no Obligation*, you luckily eſcap'd all that *Shame* which would have naturally reſulſulted from *ſuch a Commitment and Tryal*, as ours; a Tryal of Perſons, committed for no juſt Offence, to an *offenſive Priſon*; nay, I may ſay to *many*, on the (I had almoſt ſaid *ſuborn'd*) Accuſation, of an egregious Offender, againſt *us in particular*, and almoſt all the Laws of *Piety*, *Decency*, and *common Civility in general*. *One*, who on Account of the Violation of *all theſe Laws*, ought (with due Submiſſion) I conceive to have been committed in our Stead; this Obſervation brings to my Mind, a Couplet of Verſes wrote by an Author, to which perhaps you have not half the *Objection* you might to a Chriſtian Divine, a *Whitefield!* or a *Weſtley!* I mean, the *ludicrous Hudibras*, who remarks ſomewhere,

That Juſtice tho' ſhe winks at Crimes,
Stumbles on Innocence ſometimes.

But

But I would beg leave to recommend to you along with *Hudibras* * the *St. James's Evening Poſt*, of *November* 28, 1751, in which the Author of a Letter contain'd in the Paper of that Day *pretty clearly ſhews*, whoſe Right it was to have been committed.

§ 18. I have now, Sir, preſented you with a juſt Schedule of your Behaviour towards me in the reſiſtleſs Capacity of a Juſtice of the Peace, in order, if you pleas'd, that you might purſue the Paths of Peace, by calling yourſelf to a juſt Account for this Part of your Conduct, and by a *ſuitable Repentance*, anticipate your being called to a ſtrict Account for it, by that *impartial Judge* who is *no* Reſpecter of Perſons, but will render to every Man, according to his Deeds. And in the Diſcharge of this important Duty to yourſelf, put your Hand upon your Heart, and ingenuouſly aſk yourſelf the ſerious Queſtions following. " Have I indeed done in this Caſe by theſe People, as in like Circumſtances I would in Reaſon expect to have been done by? Have not I a Right to judge for myſelf in Matters of Religion? Is it not apparent that no *other Perſon* can judge for me; becauſe no other Perſon can be accountable for me? Has not God intruſted to *each* of us a Talent of *Reaſon* and *Underſtanding*, the Improvement of which, he will exact of each at his *own* Hands? What then has *any one elſe* to do, to require an Aſſent to Doctrines, or Conformity to human Inſtitutions of Religion, of any Man, contrary to his own impartial Judgment? Certainly if *Law* will juſtify me in ſuch Demands, *Reaſon* and *Conſcience will not*. If I would not willingly be *compell'd*

* A Copy of which is annexed to this Pamphlet.

to

to *think* or *act* contrary to my own *beſt Judgment*, how could I, in Reaſon and common Equity, endeavour by *Threats*, *Confiſcation of Goods* and *Impriſonment*, to *compel* others to prefer *my Judgment*, to *their own*? Will gratifying imperious Prieſts; whoſe *Pride*, and *Thirſt for Power*, and *Dominion*, is inſatiable, compenſate for the *Anger of God*, and the *Anguiſh of a guilty Conſcience*? What is the *End* of Magiſtracy, Authority, and Rulers? It is the *Protection of Virtue*, *Religion*, *and Innocence*, or is it not? Reaſon and Nature are clearly on the affirmative; and the *Scripture* expreſly declares, that Rulers are not a *Terror* to good Works but to Evil; can it be a Matter of Doubt then which Party of the two had a natural Claim to my *Patronage* and *Defence*; *that* which was compos'd of Perſons who aſſembled together for religious Purpoſes, *i. e.* for their mutual Edification, and the worſhipping God according to their own Conſciences: Or *that* which was compos'd of public Libertines and Perſons openly profane? *Religious Perſons!* who if miſtaken, govern'd their Conduct with Innocence according to their Conſciences, or *irreligious Perſons* who were ungovernable by the plaineſt Rules of Reaſon, and therefore undeniably miſtaken, and rudely and impiouſly interrupted their Neighbours, who were no ways concerned with them, in their religious Worſhip; in Defiance of *all Conſcience* and Contempt of *common Decency*? How ſhall I excuſe myſelf in this Matter to my Maker, who has expreſly forbid the calling Good Evil, and Evil Good, and denounced a Woe againſt thoſe who are guilty of ſo doing? How can I excuſe my-

ſelf to my Conſcience for ſuch a Perverſion of the Power I was veſted with by my Prince, as I have been guilty of towards theſe People? People! that becauſe I looked upon them as helpleſs, I offered them up as a Sacrifice to the moſt *unreaſonable Caprice*; whereas by how much the more *helpleſs*, by ſo much the more were they the proper Objects of my *Patronage and Protection?* 'Twas for the *Service* of ſuch Perſons, ſuch uſeful (tho' impotent) Members of the Community, (and the Detection and Reſtraint of their Oppreſſors) that Government was originally inſtituted amongſt Men; and what now can *God*, my *Prince*, my *Country*, and my *Conſcience* require at my Hands, in this unhappy Matter? Can any Thing leſs be required by either, than *Reſtitution* and *Compenſation? a Reſtitution* to my poor devout Neighbour, of that Property which by my Warrant was forcibly taken from her, becauſe ſhe ſteadily adhered to the Dictates of her *own* Conſcience, and which has obliged her and her helpleſs Orphans, ever ſince to depend in a great Meaſure on the Charity of Friends for Subſiſtence, and *a Compenſation* to my other juſt Complainants for the Loſs of their Liberty, and ſubjecting them to the ſhocking Inconveniencies of a Priſon, for no other *Crime in Reality*, when the Matter is fairly traced up to its Source, but judging for themſelves in *a Matter* where both *Intereſt and Duty conſpired* to *oblidge them* to it, and then *acting* conformably to ſuch their *unbiaſs'd Judgments?* Certainly, certainly, in either Caſe nothing leſs,"

§ 19. Having aſked yourſelf theſe plain and reaſonable Queſtions, and received the impartial Determina-

Determinations of Conſcience concerning them, I would humbly beg Leave to offer to you, for your farther ſerious Meditation, what was long ſince offer'd to public Conſideration, by Mr. *Locke* in his Letters concerning Toleration.

" It is not the Diverſity of Opinions (which cannot be avoided) but the Refuſal of Toleration to thoſe that are of different Opinions, (which might have been granted) that has produced all the Buſtles and Wars that have been in the Chriſtian World on Account of Religion. The Heads and Leaders of the Church, moved by Avarice and inſatiable Deſire of Dominion, making uſe of the immoderate Ambition of Magiſtrates, and the credulous Superſtition of the giddy Multitude, have incenſed and animated them againſt thoſe that diſſent from themſelves, by preaching unto them contrary to the Laws of the Goſpel, and to the Precepts of Charity, that Schiſmaticks and Hereticks are to be outed of their Poſſeſſions and deſtroy'd. And thus have they mix'd together and confounded two Things that are in themſelves moſt different, the Church and the Common-wealth. Now, as it is very difficult for Men patiently to ſuffer themſelves to be ſtrip'd of the Goods they have got by their honeſt Induſtry, and contrary to all the Laws of Equity, both human and divine, to be deliver'd up for a Prey to other Mens Violence and Rapine, eſpecially when they are otherwiſe altogether blameleſs, and that the Occaſion for which they are thus treated, does not at all belong to the Juridiction of the Magiſtrate, [you will pleaſe particularly to mark that, Sir,] but [pray obſerve] entirely to the Conſcience of every particular Man, for the

Conduct

Conduct of which he is accountable to God only; what elſe can be expected, but that theſe Men growing weary of the Evils under which they labour, ſhould in the End think it lawful [according to what Meaſure, I pray you, Sir? Not the Civil Law, cuſtomarily ſo call'd, certainly, becauſe 'tis by Perſons acting under Sanction of this Species of Law, that they are born down, inſulted and oppreſs'd, but, conſequently, according to the Meaſure of the Law of Nature, Reaſon and Conſcience] for them to reſiſt Force with Force, and to defend their NATURAL Rights, which are not forfeitable on Account of Religion, with Arms as well as they can? That this has been hitherto the ordinary Courſe of Things, is abundantly evident in Hiſtory, and that it will continue to be ſo hereafter, is but too apparent in Reaſon; it cannot, indeed, be otherwiſe as long as the Principles of Perſecution for Religion ſhall prevail, as it has done hitherto with Magiſtrate and People; and ſo long as thoſe that ought to be the Preachers of Peace and Concord ſhall continue, with all their Art and Strength, to excite Men to Arms, and ſound the Trumpet of War. But that Magiſtrates ſhould thus ſuffer theſe Incendiaries and Diſturbers of the public Peace might juſtly be wonder'd at, if it did not appear that they have been invited by them unto a Participation of the Spoil, and have therefore thought fit to make uſe of their Covetouſneſs and Pride, as Means whereby to increaſe their own Power; for who does not ſee, that theſe good Men are indeed more Miniſters of the Government than Miniſters of the Goſpel, and that by flattering the Ambition, and favouring the Dominion of

Princes,

Princes, and Men in Authority, they endeavour with all their Might, to promote that Tyranny in the Commonwealth which otherwiſe they ſhould not be able to eſtabliſh in the Church! This is the unhappy Agreement that we ſee between the Church and the State; whereas, if each of them would contain itſelf within its own Bounds, the one attending to the worldly Welfare of the Commonwealth, the other to the Salvation of Souls, it is impoſſible that any Diſcord ſhould ever have happen'd between them. *Sed pudet hæc opprobria, &c.* God Almighty grant, I beſeech him, that the Goſpel of Peace may at length be preach'd, and that Civil Magiſtrates, growing more careful to conform their own Conſciences to the Law of God, and leſs ſolicitous about the binding of other Mens Conſciences by human Laws, may, like Fathers of their Country, direct all their Councils and Endeavours to promote, univerſally, the Civil Welfare of all their Children, except only of ſuch as are arrogant, ungovernable and injurious to their Brethren; and that all Eccleſiaſtical Men, who boaſt themſelves the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles, walking peaceably and modeſtly in the Apoſtles Steps, without intermedling in State Affairs, may apply themſelves wholly to promote the Salvation of Souls."

Now I am not quite certain, Sir, whether any Eccleſiaſtical Men in Mr. *Locke*'s Time were in the Commiſſion of the Peace, and if there were, whether the Preſervation of the Game was a Matter which then as ſeriouſly engroſs'd the joint Attention of the Eccleſiaſtical and Lay Juſtices, as it has ſome Time ſince, and if it did, whether this furniſhed them with

Oppor-

Opportunities of mutually inviting each other to the Participation of the *Mulct* or *Fine* betwixt them, which tho' the Property of the *Informer* and the *Poor*, yet in that Caſe became the Spoil of venal Villains, and contemptable Mercenaries? But as theſe are Interrogatories which your Worſhip may poſſibly think not ſo proper to be aſked by a Woman, and which therefore, for manly Reaſons, you may chuſe to conceal from her Knowledge, I ſhall content myſelf in my Ignorance of it. (it being a Point which may not, perhaps, ſo immediately concern an enthuſiaſtical Woman! as a rational Juſtice of the Peace, or a wiſe Man as to Things of this World) and proceed to reaſon with your Worſhip a little farther, on the important Subjects of Religion, and religious Liberty.

§ 20. Admit then for Arguments Sake, that the *Methodiſts* are as whimſical and enthuſiaſtical a Body of People as your Worſhip may be willing to have them thought to be; muſt it not be at the ſame Time admitted, that Reformation of Manners is rational? Now it is undeniable, that *Methodiſm* has frequently effected *a Reformation of Manners!* among the *Looſe*, the *Abandon'd*, the *notoriouſly Profane*, and the *ſcandalouſly Diſſolute*, when all the regular Methods uſually had Recourſe to for that Purpoſe, have proved ineffectual, ſuch as *Education*, friendly *Perſwaſion*, *cuſtomary Preaching*, &c.

Let it be ſuppos'd then, that while I am now writing, *Sunday*, *July* 26, 1752, the Churches of the Eſtabliſhment, throughout the three Kingdoms, are ſtored with their cuſtomary Attendants, the Congregations of the Diſſenters are fill'd as uſual, with their reſpective Adherents; but

but that, beſides all theſe, there are great Numbers of unhappy People, who, from a variety of Motives, are ſpending their Time as if they were not rational and accountable Creatures, but wholly ſenſitive, as if their ſole Buſineſs *here* was to *eat* and to *drink*, to *ſleep* and *play*, and gratify their Senſes on all ſuch Opportunities of Leiſure. Let it be admitted to, that they proceed upon a *miſtaken* Principle, and that, tho' they *thus* live, they will unavoidably think otherwiſe when they *come to die*; that, if their Conſciences are not ſpeedily *rouſed*, and they by ſome merciful Providence or other, waked out of their Lethargy of Sin and Senſuality, made ſenſible that the *Day* is far ſpent, and the *Night* is at Hand, they are in the *broad Way* to Deſtruction; their *Ruin* inevitable, and their Souls *undone* for ever. Let it now be ſuppoſed, that a *Methodiſt* Preacher ſets up the Standard of the everlaſting Goſpel, like his Maſter, in the *open Fields*; that excited by *Novelty*, Numbers of *ſtubborn* Creatures, whom neither a regular Education, friendly Exhortation, nor any of the numerous Motives to a Change of Conduct, reſulting to them, from the Conſideration of their own Intereſt, either *here* or *hereafter*, could prevail with; and that *here* they ſhould be met with, *here at laſt* many ſeemingly *loſt*, and out of Reach by any of the *ordinary* Methods of Conviction, ſhould be *alarm'd* with a Conſciouſneſs of *their Guilt*, and thoſe *Ramblers* in the *high Ways* and *Hedges*, ſhould by the *uncuſtomary Manner* of public Field-Preaching by the *Methodiſt*, be brought to a ſerious Senſe of their *Miſtake*, and the Danger conſequent upon it; and, that by this Sort of *ſupernumerary Meſ-*

ſengers

ſengers of the great Prince! *they* ſhould be compelled to contribute towards filling his Houſe at the Marriage-Feaſt, and whether their *ſpeculative Sentiments* in Chriſtianity, ſhould afterwards be exactly conformable to *Truth* or not, yet their *Practice* ſhould be right; if of notorious *Sabbath-Breakers* they ſhould become ſuch as with profound Reverence and exemplary Humility, ſhould *ſanctify the Sabbath* to the Lord; of public *Swearers*, ſuch as ſhould *fear an Oath*; of *Whoremongers and Adulterers*, they ſhould become remarkably *chaſte* and *modeſt*; of *Lyars*, become *Lovers* of *Truth*; and of thoſe that had *ſtole*, ſhould *ſteal no more*. Theſe, Sir, are ſuch Alterations in their Conduct, as are apparently of advantageous Conſequence to *Society*, and an ample Compenſation too, for the Loſs of now and then an Hour from the *ſecular Buſineſs* of Life, to hear a *Sermon* on working Days. Beſides, if the *Change* be ſuch as one would wiſh for, a Reſpect will by them be had to the *moral Duty* of Juſtice to others, and filling up the *Duties* of their Stations, as well as to the more intellectual and ſpiritual Duties of *Prayer* and *Praiſe*, and inculcating Repentance and Reformation on others, as Opportunity offers.

§ 21. 'Tis true, I have been told, one Mr. *Bayle*, a celebrated Writer! a Star of the firſt Magnitude in the Hemiſphere of *Learning*, has declared it to be his Opinion, that *Atheiſm* does not *ſo much* Diſſervice to the *ſecular Intereſts of Society*, as *Superſtition*. Great Men naturally delight in their ſedentary Hours, to converſe with great Authors, and from thence become their Proſelytes, and the ſtrenuous Vouchers of their more refin'd Axioms; and 'tis not altogether

ther improbable, that you are by this Means become a *Baylean* in this Point: If ſo, I muſt own I am of a different Opinion. This, I am perſwaded, will be no Matter of Wonder to your Worſhip, or any one elſe, it being nothing at all uncommon, for a poor ſilly Woman, to eſpouſe the other Side of the Queſtion, in Matters purely *ſpeculative* and *metaphyſical*, to a Gentleman of Learning, that accuſtoms himſelf to rack his Brains, concerning ſuch *airy* Points, (tho' his Toil ſhould be rewarded with nothing more than Wind;) but then, the Difference between your Worſhip's *Capacity* and *mine*, I conceive, will not alone be deem'd an Argument ſufficient to juſtify my Diſſent; we being equal as to the Dignity of Species, *i. e.* we being alike *rational and accountable Creatures*, 'tis fit my Reaſons for my Diſſention, ſuch as they are, ſhould be produced; and who knows, but it may happen here, with regard to this Point in Metaphyſicks, as it ſometimes has in a particular Point of *Chirurgery* or *Phyſick*, where a *good old Woman's Preſcription* has wrought a Cure, when a regular Phyſician's has had no other Effect, but adding to the Patient's Miſery, and emptying his Pocket.

§ 22. What then, Sir, is *Atheiſm?* Why, as it has been judiciouſly defin'd, it is (I think) a Diſbelief of the Exiſtence of a Deity, a Providence, and any ſuch Thing as Religion at all; whereas, *Superſtition* neceſſarily implies, the Belief of the Exiſtence of a God, a Providence, and Religion; tho' it implies alſo, *Extravagance* in Devotion, or a *Conduct* not govern'd by the Laws of Reaſon and Nature. Now it ſeems to me, that a Glaſs of Wine, tho' adulterated with Cyder,

Cyder, or mix'd with Water, is vaſtly prefer-able, when I am thirſty, to nothing, or to a Draught of Wormwood and Gall, or any Kind of Liquor of a deſtructive and poiſonous Quality; and not leſs ſo is Religion to Irreligion, tho' adulterated. I take it here, to be a Matter agreed between us, that the *Soul* is ſomething diſtinct from *Matter*, and between *which* and *the Body* there is no natural Connexion, or *neceſſary Relation* in the Nature of Things, but is join'd to it, in an incomprehenſible Manner, by the omnipotent Being; and is naturally capable of ſubſiſting, ſeperate from Body, as it is a *Spirit*, and as ſuch, ally'd to the ſupreme Spirit, and every intermediate *Species of Spirits* between him and us. The *Soul* of every human Being, I take to be *a Part* of the *intellectual World*, a Member of the *rational* Community, of which *God* is at the Head, and the Diſtribution of the ſeveral Members of which, both in Time and Eternity, is under the Direction and Management of infinite Wiſdom. The *Spirit of Men* then being in our preſent compound State of Exiſtence, greatly ſubject to be influenced by the Body, to whom it is intimately and immediately ally'd, is in a State of Imperfection, and ſurrounded with Temptations, to deviate from the *Dictates* of Reaſon and Conſcience, which it has not always Reſolution and Fortitude ſufficent to reſiſt. A *Compliance* with Temptations to Sin, is attended with *Remorſe*; Remorſe *induces* the Man to look out for Methods proper to procure him a *Reconciliation* with God, whoſe righteous Laws he is conſcious of having violated. *Means* of Reconciliaton there as certainly are, as that God is infinitely merciful; but *no*

Means

Means we can make uſe of, can be *right*, or *in Reaſon* ſuppos'd to be effectual, that are not attended with an unfeigned *Repentance*, and immediate actual *Reformation*. The *Soul*, in this Situation, thirſteth for God, for Peace with the living God, and cries out, Oh! how ſhall I acceptably appear before God? *Nature* propoſes *Repentance* and *Reformation* ſingly. *Revelation* propoſes the Superaddition of ſomething elſe. The falſe Revelations of the *Heathens* propoſed the Superaddition of Sacrifices, Pilgrimages, external Purifications, Faſtings, ridiculous Mortifications, Luſtrations, and what not. The *true Chriſtian Revelation* propoſes the Superaddition of *Faith* in *Chriſt*, as the *Sent* of God, to be an *expiatory Sacrifice* for the Sins of the World, and the Salvation of Mankind, it *expreſsly* declaring, he *taſted Death* for *every* Man. But now, perfect as the Chriſtian Revelation is, it is too ſublime to be *perfectly* underſtood, or accounted for in the Way of Reaſon, by our imperfect Faculties; ſo that notwithſtanding the Truth of Revelation, the Imperfection of our rational Faculties, lays us, after all, under an Obligation, either to reſt ſhort of Revelation on the one Hand, merely in Repentance and Reformation, the ſimple Dictates of Nature; or in a greater or leſſer Degree, to *launch out* into the *Ocean* of *Superſtition* and *Enthuſiaſm*, as the World phraſes it; on the other, by taking *Revelation* as a Rule, vouchſafed us for our religious Conduct, over and above the Dictates of Reaſon and Nature. For, as the *Bible itſelf*, and not our fellow Chriſtians *Senſe* of the Bible, is the Religion of Proteſtants; ſo as a *Proteſtant indeed*, I am to judge of the *Meaning of Scripture*, with Regard to

each of its *Doctrines* and Inſtitutions ſingly, by my *own Faculties*, under Sub-degrees of the Guidance of his Spirit, as God ſhall be pleaſed to grant me; upon *Proteſtant* Principles the Bible is a Chriſtian's *Rule*, but then, his own *beſt Judgment*, Underſtanding and Conſcience, is his *only rational Guide*, in the *Application* of this Rule.

Suppoſe the *Rule* then to be *perfect*, the *Guide* I am to follow in the Application of it is *imperfect*, and my religious Conduct, likewiſe, muſt unavoidably be imperfect, and iſſue in ſome Kind, or Degree, of *Superſtition*, upon purely rational Principles. Having now plainly ſhewn you, Sir, that every Denomination of Chriſtians, are, by the very *Imperfection* of their Reaſon, *guilty* of Superſtition, in a *Degree*, and I may defy you, by *Reaſon* to prove there is *any one* that is not; what a Degree of *Stupidity* muſt it be, in Mr. *Bayle* or his Followers, like *Plutarch*, a mere *Heathen*, to endeavour to ſhew that Superſtition is worſe than Atheiſm? This ſtrange *Hypotheſis*, when traced thro' its reſpective proper Conſequences, will be found to terminate in this yet more *ſhocking one*, that *Chriſtianity* is worſe than *Atheiſm*. Here, Sir, I think it muſt be pretty near Time to take my Leave of you, with Regard to this particular Subject of Diſputation between us; but, by ſo doing, I ſhould perhaps leave you in a more deplorable Situation than I was ever in, when confin'd by you in a Priſon, as a Puniſhment for my Superſtition, or more properly *ſpeaking*, for my being a conſiſtent Chriſtian.

§ 23. Now, tho' the great *Chamberlain* tells us, one Monſieur *Thiers*, (a Papiſt) has obſerved in a Treatiſe,

a Treatiſe of *popular Superſtitions*, that *Women* are naturally more inclined to *Superſtition* than *Impiety*; yet I would not be underſtood to argue for Superſtition, as ſuch: No, no, but only, *as pardonable*, when attended with *Sincerity*, which under the Goſpel is affirm'd by numberleſs Chriſtian Divines, to be accepted by God, in lieu of *paradiſaical Perfection*. So that, when it is abſolutely involuntary, and the ſimple Effect of judging impartially and honeſtly for ones ſelf, concerning the Will of God, as delivered in the Scriptures, *ſuch* Superſtition is properly the Object of *God's Pardon* and *Mans Charity*; *ſuch* Superſtition is invariably attended with a *Deteſtation* of Impiety and Immorality, as well of the *Heart* as the *Life*, and the ſincereſt Love to moral Rectitude, or, in St. *James*'s Phraſe, to ſhewing the *Truth* of Faith by Works. Hence this Species of ſuperſtitious Perſons amongſt the *Methodiſts*, lay out themſelves, *Day and Night*, to convince Men of the Danger of reſting in any Thing *ſhort of a good Life*, and would willingly ſpend, and be ſpent, in turning Men from Sin and Satan to the living God. And whilſt ſuch *lukewarm* Gentlemen, as Dr. *Stebbing*, would perſwade Men, that the *Methodiſts* indefatigable Diligence to awake Sinners from their Lethargy, and *flaming Zeal* for the ſpiritual Happineſs of Mankind in another World, is *all religious Deluſion*; the *Methodiſts* would fain perſwade them to *depart* from *Evil* and do Good; not to ſeek for *Happineſs* where it is not to be found, but to look upon the World as *tranſitory*, and its *Enjoyments* as *periſhing* with the *Uſing*; to ſeek, by a *holy* Life, a *happy Death*; and by *Faith in Chriſt*, and patiently

following him, in Tribulation, to ſeek for Glory, Honour and Immortality; a City not built with Hands, eternal in the Heavens, whoſe Builder and Maker is God: In fine, for *durable Riches* and Righteouſneſs. What Wonder, Sir, if *ſuch* Men, by *ſuch* Meaſures, ſhould be inſtrumental in re-eſtabliſhing primitive Chriſtianity in the World! whilſt *ſuch* who ſeek the *Fleece* more than the *Happineſs of the Flock*, for *large Benefices*, temporal Riches, Power and Grandeur, inſtead of *benefiting* their Hearers, and inſtructing them in the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; ſuch as lull Men to carnal Security, by exceſſive Recommendations of drudging in their Callings, as if they were to live here for ever; and are ever adviſing them to the regularly performing a *Round* of external Ceremonies, and Lip-Devotions, both in the one Caſe and the other, only teach them to loſe the *End* in the *Means*. In ſhort, Sir, large *temporal Revenues*, for ſpiritual Inſtructions, is a Propoſition which carries in the very Face of it, an earthly *Deſign* under a ſpiritual *Shew*; and to be plain, I ever thought, attempting to propagate original Chriſtianity, by ſuch ſelf-intereſted, *ſordid Inſtruments*, muſt, in a great Meaſure, fail of Effect. The *thinking* Part of Mankind, are induced to lay but little Streſs on what is recommended to their Belief, or Practice, by the Prieſt as Matter of *ſupernatural Revelation*, when they plainly ſee his *Prieſt-craft*, and the Preference he gives to natural good Things, above living himſelf a Life of *Faith*, and practical Contempt of the World.

The conforming Prieſt, how frequently is it ſeen, that his *firſt* and *chief* Buſineſs, like the worldly

worldly wiſe Man of any other Profeſſion, is to make *Intereſt* with Friends, to ſupplicate the *Great*, and to deceive the *Devout*, by a *Shew* of Devotion; to procure him a Place, with a large Benefice, and if he ſucceeds, to *add*, by the ſame Artifices, others to it, till he is increaſed in *Goods* and *needeth nothing*, but, what? a *Canonry*, a *Prebendary*, an *Arch-deaconry*, a *Deanry*, a *Biſhoprick*, an *Arch-biſhoprick*; but, if it happens there are too many in before him, and theſe are Honours, Preferments, and Dignities in the Church, which are unfortunately placed out of his Reach, no Matter, his Soul is of no *common* Caſt; he *has* Riches, and what ſhould hinder, but he ſhould poſſeſs its Adjunct, Dominion? he feels himſelf *diſpos'd* to it; he muſt certainly be *born* for Rule, and if it does not offer in *the Church*, yet, ſtill it may be acquired in the State; and the Honour of being one of his Majeſty's *Juſtices of the Peace*, (with all its Hurry and unavoidable Fatigue) ſhall be *aſſiduouſly* ſought for, and *graſp'd* to his Soul, by one who would, at the ſame Time, *paſs* for a Follower of the *meek* and *lowly Jeſus!* by one, whoſe proper Province it is, to diſſwade Mankind from ſetting their Affections on Things which are on the Earth, and to convince them he is in Earneſt, by his own Example: Prepoſterous Conduct! *well* may theſe Gentlemen utter, with an *audible* Voice, in the Midſt of the Congregation, *Lord have Mercy upon us miſerable Sinners!*

§ 24. But the Univerſitarian is not ſo deſpicable for all this, as to be deſtitute of good Company, but ſuch only as is to be met with in *Oxford* and *Cambridge*; no, may it pleaſe

your Worſhip, the *Diſſenting Academic* walks *Side* by *Side* with him, in the pleaſing Paths of worldly Riches and Honours,. He alſo aſſiduouſly labours in the Word and Doctrine, from *Congregation* to *Congregation*, from *London* to the *Country*, and from the *Country* to *London*, till at length, by his own Labours, and Friends Recommendation, he obtains *a Call!* to lead Men in the Way of Salvation, with the *additional* Inducement of forty, fifty, or ſixty Pounds *per Annum*. But being at length qualified for a more popular Congregation, either by ſetling with a young Lady of a tolerable Fortune, or otherwiſe thinking he needs to add to his Fortune by means of his Accompliſhments, natural or acquired, he procures a ſecond Call; a Call ſo loud! that he can neither refuſe hearing, or obeying it, and which he has not the Shadow of a Thought of diſregarding, till he is alarm'd with one yet more loud and advantageous. Thus advantangeous Calls to change of Pulpits, are attentively liſtened to, till *Wealth*, *Age*, or *Indolence*, renders him deaf, even to the Voice of the Charmer itſelf. 'Tis true, this is not always the Caſe. with either the Conforming, or Diſſenting Clergy; but, alas! 'tis too generally the Caſe with both.

§ 25. But the *Methodiſt Clergy*, propoſe to introduce a very neceſſary Reformation in this particular; they *know* it is their Duty to wean Men's Affections from the World, and to render the Pomps and Vanities of it to them as deſpicable as they really are in themſelves. They *know* they are as inſignificant in Point of ſpiritual Happineſs to themſelves, as to others. They *know* Mankind are generally influenced, more

more by *Example*, than *Precept*; that Chriſt himſelf directed his Diſciples, when firſt he ſent them to preach the Kingdom of God, to *contemn* ſuperfluous Accommodations, and by *his Direction*, as near as poſſible, they *deſire*, and *endeavour*, to govern their Conduct. If Chriſt's own Example, and expreſs Directions then, to his Diſciples, for the Regulation of their Conduct, when he firſt ſent them to preach the Goſpel to the World, is recorded in Scripture that *his Diſciples* in after-Ages might be *aſſured* of his *Will* concerning their Behaviour in it; then, I infer *they muſt be right*.

§ 26. Chriſt himſelf, tho' *King* of his Church, abſolutely deſpiſed what the Kingdoms of the World covet, namely temporal Riches and Honour. When the grand Adverſary of Mankind, ſhewed him all the Kingdoms of this tranſitory World, and the Glory of them; and ſaid "All theſe Things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and Worſhip me," he could anſwer him, "Get thee behind me *Satan*, for it is written, Thou ſhall worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve." Oh! that thoſe who *now paſs* in the World, for his Diſciples, could thus ſpeak! when Riches and Honours are preſented to them, they generally forget, the "Get thee behind me *Satan*," of their profeſs'd Maſter, (which at once procured him both the Abſence of the Devil, and the Miniſtration of Angels,) and on the contrary, joyfully cry out, practically at leaſt, "Oh! come walk before me *Satan*, and lead me where ſoever thou wilt, ſo thou ſafely conduct me,

but to the Poſſeſſion of thoſe ſweet lovely Emoluments."

§ 27. And as Chriſt abſolutely deſpiſed them himſelf, ſo his own expreſs Orders to his Diſciples, the firſt Preachers of his Goſpel among Men, to deſpiſe them alſo, were abſolute. "Take *nothing* for your Journey, neither Staves nor Scrip, neither *Bread*, neither *Money*, neither have two Coats apiece." How *inſignificant*, how ridiculous muſt all the *labour'd* Arguments of the *learned Preachers* of Chriſtianity be, in favour of *ſettled Benefices*, ſtated *Salaries* and *Penſions*, when oppos'd to ſo clear, and expreſs an Injunction, delivered to the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, by the very Mouth of their Maſter? What ſignifies all their learned Toil, to ſettle the true Meaning of a doubtful *Word*, when uſed concerning a *Doctrine* of Chriſtianity, merely of the *metaphyſical* and ſpeculative Species, when the *plaineſt Words* of the *cleareſt Signification*, that immediately regard their *own* Practice, they take no Manner of Notice of?

There is no Need of having Recourſe to the etymoligical Derivation of the Term NOTHING, for its genuine Acceptation, "Take *nothing* for your Journey! no, but leſt it ſhould be explain'd away, and in after-Times inſinuated to Chriſt's *Lambs*, by *Wolves* in Sheeps Cloathing, that it was to be underſtood not in a direct but in a limitted and reſtrain'd Senſe, not literally but figuratively; Chriſt himſelf explains his own Meaning, and enjoins them to take neither *Staves* nor *Scrip*, neither Bread, neither Money, neither two Coats apiece. How *abſolutely* are they to rely on God's Providence, and to live by Faith? To whom are they ſent? Is it to Chriſtians,

ſtians, from whom they might reaſonably expect the Exerciſe of brotherly Love? No, to *Jews*, who had *Moſes* and the Prophets, and were abſolute Strangers to a ſpiritual Meſſiah; and therefore from whom, in Reaſon, there was nothing for a Subſiſtence to be expected; according to carnal Reaſon then, they were ſent out into the World to be ſtarved. To a faſhionable Divine, now, who ventures not a Step without Advice from his Privy Councellor, Human Prudence, a *Mahometan Dervis*, would be infinitely more eligible, than a Preacher of the Goſpel of Chriſt. But, God be thanked, there are yet thoſe who walk by Faith, and not by Sight, who can venture to preach Chriſt's *own* Goſpel, upon Chriſt's *own* Terms. To preach to Chriſtians by *Name!* but by *Nature* or *Behaviour*, more *Dogmatical* than *Jews*, and more *Savage* than *Turks*. What a Catalogue of innocent Men, yea, virtuous Chriſtian Teachers of the *Methodiſt* Denomination, are readily to be produc'd, as glorious Inſtances of this melancholly Truth! but I ſhall content myſelf, with the Mention of that recent one, Mr. *Wheatly* at *Norwich*; Mr. *Wheatly* ſo effectually anſwer'd the *End* of preaching the Goſpel, that there was ſcarce a *Street* in that populous Place, in which a *Reformation*, in a greater or leſſer Degree, was not wrought amongſt the licentious Part of its Inhabitants, which Reformation was no leſs *agreeable* to the Sincere of every Denomination, than it was *admirable* to all; but, alas! alas! inſtead of exciting a Spirit of Thankfulneſs, at the happy (the much to be wiſh'd for) Alteration, in the Breaſts of the phariſaical Preachers of the Goſpel, *they* became concern'd!

and

and alarm'd! and ſo far to be apprehenſive of its Conſequences, as to ſet up the old popular Cry, "Great is *Diana* of the *Epheſians*;" and the *mercenary* Silver-Smiths have again, for the preſent, put a Stop to the Progreſs of a Reformation ſo happily introduced, and ſucceſsfully advanced; and *Tumult* and *Confuſion*, *Mobbing* and *Miſchief* have taken Place in its Stead. As to the *thoughtleſs Herd*, they are the Objects of Pity, my Bowels yearn towards them; Father forgive them, they know not what they do; but their Leaders! Oh, how truly deplorable is their State. Theſe cannot be ignorant of the Obſervation of Chriſt, that a Kingdom *divided* againſt itſelf is brought to Deſolation; and a Houſe *divided* againſt a Houſe, falleth; they know that Offences will come; but they likewiſe know, who it is that hath ſaid, Woe unto them by whom they come; they know, that when Chriſt himſelf was applauded for an ingenuous and acute Harangue, to their Brethren the Pharaſees, and ſaluted by one of the devout Sex, (who ſeem to have then made up a conſiderable Part of his Admirers) with, "Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked," his Anſwer was, Yea, rather, *bleſſed* are they, that *hear* the Word of God and *keep it*. Now, either the Command of Chriſt to his Diſciples, to take nothing for their Journey, neither Staves nor Scrip, neither Bread, neither ——— what? *Money*. (*A confounding* Sentence,) was the Word of God, or it was not; if it was, happy are they who hear the Word of God and do it; if it was not, then Chriſtianity is indeed all Enthuſiaſm, all a Farce, and there is no true Religion in the World, but Deiſm,

Deiſm, or the Religion of Reaſon and Nature; and if ſo, it would be well nigh Time to give over Anathematizing of Infidels.

§ 28. Theſe blind Leaders of the Blind, and conſequently groſs Abuſers of the venerable Name, under which they ſhelter themſelves, were they not reſtrain'd by penal Laws, would as readily make their Way to *Opulence and Dominion*, thro' a *Sea of human Blood!* as (not only the Pope, whoſe Example they would ridiculouſly pretend not to follow but) *Jehu* the *Jew*, with whoſe *ſhocking Hiſtory* I will conclude my Epiſtle to your Worſhip, who I hope will be ſo effectually *ſcared* at the *horrid* Picture, as ſeriouſly to reſolve, againſt ſo much as the *Shadow* of a Reſemblance of it, in your future Conduct.

§ 29. It is, I think, ſcarce poſſible for a Perſon poſſeſs'd of but a competent Degree of thoſe ſoft and tender Paſſions of human Nature, which we dignify with the Name of Humanity, to read this melancholly Story, and refrain from Tears.

§ 30. This *furious* Zealot, when with a *barbarous* Pleaſure, he had punctually gone thro' the *bloody* Buſineſs of the Extirpation of the Royal Race, gather'd all the People together, and ſaid unto them, *Ahab* ſerved *Baal* a little, but *Jehu* ſhall ſerve him much; and then, under the plauſible Pretext of ſacrificing to *Baal*, he gather-ed together all the Worſhippers of *Baal*, with the inhuman Intention to make one general Slaughter of them! Savage Deſign! diabolical Diſpoſition!—And what renders this *Hero* in the *Devil's Cauſe*, ſingularly remarkable, is, that without the leaſt *Remorſe*, he could *deliberately* determine, on the final Deſtruction of the entire Body! without ſo much as a ſingle Exception! What! muſt he diveſt himſelf of every Thing

Thing tender and Humane, when he was to diſtinguiſh himſelf by his Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts? Shocking! What, was there no Regard to be had to *Merit* or *Demerit*, to *Education*, or the *Conſtraint* of Individuals from Superiors? No Diſtinction to be made of *Age* or *Sex*, *Rank* or *Quality*? No, this pious Butcher's flaming Zeal for the eſtabliſh'd Religion of his Country, was to be retarded by no ſuch trifling Peccadillo's, and effeminate Niceties, in Point of Conſcience as theſe; the Noble and the Ignoble, the Virtuous and the Vicious, the hoary Sire and the blooming Youth, the comely Matron, and the unſullied Charms of Virginity, fall *indiſcriminately together*, the unhappy, helpleſs *Victims* of *Jehu's inhuman Zeal* for the Lord of Hoſts.

This ſingle *dreadful* Inſtance of intemperate Zeal for Religion, one would think, ſhould be ſufficient to create an intire *Abhorrence* and Deteſtation of it, in the *Hearts* of all who read it. Well might that great Commentator, Biſhop *Patrick*, ſay, *Jehu* made bold to *diſſemble* for the Service of God, in which he cannot be exceeded. And 'tis with great Juſtice he obſerves, that God doth not ſtand in Need of any Man's Sins, to *compaſs* his Ends. Therefore, with the pious Biſhop *Taylor*, I pray, "From Fierceneſs of Rage, and Haſtineſs of Spirit, from clamorous and reproachful Language, from peeviſh Anger and inhuman Malice, from the Spirit of Contention. and haſty and indiſcreet Zeal, *good Lord deliver and preſerve thy Servants for ever.* From delaying our Repentance, and perſevering in Sin, from falſe Principles and Prejudices, from Unthankfulneſs and Irreligion, from ſeducing others and being abuſed ourſelves, from the

the Malice and Craftineſs of the Devil, and the Deceit and Lying of the World, *good Lord deliver and preſerve thy Servants for ever.* From condemning others and juſtifying ourſelves, from miſpending our Time and abuſing thy Grace, from calling Good Evil and Evil Good, from conſenting to Folly and tempting others, *good Lord deliver and preſerve thy Servants for ever.*

And now, Sir, I commend you to God, and recommend to your ſerious Meditation, the good Word of his Grace, which was communicated to the World by the royal Preacher, *Eccleſ.* vii. 16. *Be not righteous over much, neither make thyſelf over wiſe, why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thyſelf.*

HANNAH HALLIDAY.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

SIR;

I Hope there is no great Reaſon to doubt of your being convinced of the Impropriety of your Conduct towards Siſter *Seagram*, Siſter *Taylor*, and myſelf, by the ſingle Citation from Mr. *Locke*, as that rational Gentleman is, or at leaſt has been your favourite Author, your Oracle! but there are others I would willingly be of Service to likewiſe, who would eſteem the Opinion of ſome of the principal *pious Divines* of the Church of *England*, of more Weight, perhaps, than that of all the learned Laymen of *England* together; for the Sake of ſuch I have extracted the Sentiments of Dr. *Whichcot* and Biſhop *Wilkins*, concerning the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, on the Heads of private Judgment, Moderation, and the true Method of conſtructing Civil Laws.

Dr. *Whichcot* ſays, Page 235, *Sermons*, Vol. I. "We are not altogether to refer ourſelves to others, but to employ our own Faculties, and improve our own Advantages and Opportunities, and to ſee with our own Eyes, for otherwiſe we do not anſwer our Make, for without this a Man grows to be leſs, and goes backward the longer he lives and the older he grows, unleſs he improves his rational Faculties, which is the proper Perfection of intellectual Nature.

We ought to look upon this Judgment of Truth and Diſcerning, not only by Way of Privilege, and as a Security againſt Forgery, Superſtition

perſtition and Slavery, but alſo as a Charge and Duty.

It is incumbent on us to look after Information, in order to Reformation and Amendment, becauſe without Knowledge the Heart cannot be good; but then the Heart is not ſanctified from Knowledge alone, for there muſt be firſt Knowledge and then Virtue.

I dare aſſure you, no Man can be religious by another Man's Knowledge, nor any Thing of another's, no more than a Man that is ſick can be well by his Neighbour's Health. In Matters of this Nature 'tis every Body for himſelf; for theſe Perfections of the Mind, Virtue and Goodneſs, are not communicable as other Things are, they don't paſs as Eſtates and Money, and the like, but they paſs by mental Illumination, by propoſing each to other, and by the Receiver's Conſideration, and his own imbibing that which is offer'd."—Page 232. "The firſt Work of Religion is to judge and perceive, and this is a Work of Skill; and therefore for us to be unawaken'd and careleſs, not to employ our higheſt Faculties in this Work is irrational and unaccountable, unworthy of an intelligent Agent." —Page 233, "For a Man that is endued with Reaſon and Underſtanding; to ſay I did not think, I never took the Matter into Conſideration, is no other than the Account of a Fool. Really, I wonder how any Man can ſatisfy himſelf, to think that he is religious in any Degree, and yet take no Care to inform himſelf in neceſſary Truth; who doth not make it his Buſineſs to ſet up a Throne of Judgment in his own Soul; for if he ſtick here, he cannot go any farther;

ther; for if he hath any Thing that he calls Religion, it is but *Superſtition* and blind Devotion."

But this, tho' it be what is firſt in Religion, yet it is not all a Man hath to do; for when a Man hath eſtabliſh'd a Throne of Judgment in his own Soul, and is able to put a Difference between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong; then (pray Sir, let this be particularly remarked) ſecondly, he muſt reform himſelf according *to ſuch Knowledge*, and always hold himſelf *to that* which his Judgment tells him is good and right. Now, Sir, if this be true and right, then I and my Siſters did what was good and right, in reforming ourſelves according to our Knowledge, and doing *what* our Judgments told us was good and right; and then it will further clearly follow, you did what was evil and wrong, and perſecuted us for Righteouſneſs Sake, when by your Warrant Siſter *Seagram*'s Goods was taken from her, and I and my aged Siſter were impriſon'd.

The judicious Doctor proceeds; "Theſe two Things I declare to you, are ſolid and ſubſtantial in Religion, neceſſary and indiſpenſible, and a Man doth but befool himſelf to account himſelf religious, if he fail in either of theſe, if he fail in the Judgment of Right and Wrong; and if after his Judgment he doth not anſwerably reform himſelf in his Life and Actions, ſuch a Man's Religion is ſo cheap, that as it coſt him nothing, ſo it is worth nothing. Page 238, 239, The Truth is, every Man as a Learner muſt believe and give Credit to his Teacher; but yet let him not depend upon his Teacher more than needs muſt, nor longer than Need requires; for you ought not to think, that

that you muſt be in the State of a Learner all your Life. We condemn Credulity in the *Romiſh* Church, as we have good Reaſon to do; but I muſt tell you, that abſolute Reference of a Mans ſelf to others, is the very ſelf ſame Thing in the Proteſtant Religion; and thoſe Men, whatever they profeſs, are but Papiſts in it. Page 241, In all other Matters wherein Men are concern'd about the Things of this Life, they would not have Patience to ſit down ſatisfied without making due Search and Enquiry; but Matters of Religion are of the higheſt Importance to us, and therefore here is our ſpecial Employment, and herein we ought to ſhew our greateſt Care and Diligence. Theſe are Things of the greateſt Weight and Moment; and there is nothing to be alledged to the contrary, and really we do in Subſtance agree with the Papiſts, that uſurp and impoſe upon us; and we juſtify their Practice. They call Men to blind Obedience, and we practiſe it, if we do not according to our Ability and Parts, ſet up within us a Throne of Judgment, by Virtue of which we refine our Spirits and reform our Lives; this would make a good Man, and if he ſhould happen to miſtake, this would yet preſerve him; for that which proceeds from Judgment of Truth, as the Perſon doth think and ſuppoſe, tho' there be a Miſtake, the Vice of the Mind is abated, and the Man will rather be pitied and compaſſionated than condemned. He doth act becauſe it is his Judgment, becauſe he hath examined, and finds Cauſe ſo to think, after he hath heard, learn'd, pray'd and conſidered; if after all this the Man is miſtaken at laſt, he is pardonable, and his Caſe compaſſionable. But

if he hath a private Judgment, and hath not uſed due Care for better Information, he is inexcuſable; and if he be not reformed according to his Judgment, then he is ſelf-condemn'd. This is a Point of great Weight, and it lies at the Foundation of Religion; but, alas! alas! I loſe my Labour, as to the greateſt Part of the World; for tho' Liberty of Judgment be every ones Right, yet how few are there that make uſe of this Right? This, Sir, is Matter of *good* Mens Lamentation, you ſee! where Men uſe this Right they are right, tho' in certain ſpeculative Points they are wrong; and if they do not uſe this Right they are wrong, tho' in all ſpeculative Points they ſhould happen to be right. So that the whole Matter reſts upon Mens honeſtly uſing their natural Right of Judging for themſelves; and yet, you could without any viſible Uneaſineſs ſuffer the Indolent and Sottiſh, to perſiſt in the Non-employment of their nobleſt Faculties on the nobleſt Subjects, and puniſh thoſe who made the beſt Uſe of their Right of private Judgment they could, and humbly implored the great Searcher of Hearts, to direct them to make a right Uſe of this important, this valuable Right of all Men.—The good Doctor proceeds, "For the Uſe of this Right doth depend upon ſelf Improvement, by Meditation, Conſideration, Examination, Prayer and the like." If ſo, can Proteſtant Miniſters or Magiſtrates, ſuppreſs the Uſe of this Right in any, and continue Proteſtants? No, no, as Dr. *Whichcot* expreſsly declares, it appears to me, "Whatever they profeſs, they are but Papiſts in it."—Page 243, "That Man's Judgment is not worth a Ruſh in any Caſe whatſoever

ever, that hath not examined, often thought upon, and enquired into Things. Men ſhould conſider and make it their Buſineſs to be inform'd of the Difference of Things, and make due Application to God to teach their Underſtandings Knowledge, or elſe 'tis not to be expected they ſhould arrive at a true and right Judgment."—Page 268, (after he had given a true Portrait of Popery, he ſays) Now I come to give you an Account of the Reformed Church, and I will ſay concerning it—what? Why what is really worth the particular Obſervation of certain Gentlemen now in being, Gentlemen who can't be content with barely ſitting on the Bench of Juſtices of the Peace, but would at all Events be juſtling themſelves into his Holineſs's Chair too. The Account the Doctor gives us of the Reform'd Church is this, that it doth neither perſecute, nor hold any Principles of Diſturbance, but maintains Principles of Peace. If any Man in the Reform'd Church do, I muſt declare, that it is the Fault of particular Parties, and not to be charged on the Reform'd Church. 'Tis to you I write, Sir, I could wiſh this black Cap were not to fit you; but if upon due Trial you find it does, I will by no Means envy you what is your Property, take it, and wiſely wear it. And to make this appear, I will begin with what the Church of *England* declares; and I had beſt for that, quote ſome of the Homilies, of which there is one concerning Contention and Strife, and particularly that which is occaſion'd by Principles of Religion; the Words are theſe, It is far better and more worthy, for any one to give Place to another, and let his Argument fall, than to win the Victory with Breach of Charity.

Then for the Antients, " 'Tis, ſaid, one, unnatural to Religion to be forced for a Man's Religion muſt be choſen. St. *Auſtin* gives this Account of the *Circumcellians*, the worſt Sort of *Donatiſts*, ſaith he, we bring theſe before the civil Magiſtrate, not becauſe they err in Matters of Faith, but becauſe they Perſecute and are Troubleſome.

They brought them before the Magiſtrate to reſtrain their Violence, not to compel them to believe; thus St. *Auſtin*; and indeed there needs nothing to promote Religion, but gentle and friendly Ways, for in Point of natural Religion (which takes in Sobriety, Righteouſneſs and Piety) you may eaſily ſatisfy any Man by Reaſon, for no Man is in any Thing more certain, than that he ought to be ſober and temperate, than that to deal righteouſly, and ſo as he would be dealt by, and that he ought to carry himſelf equally and fairly, and that he ought to fear and reverence the Deity, for theſe are the Dictates of natural Light; therefore, if we will ſhew ourſelves to be Men, we muſt live in the Practice of theſe Principles, and comply with them. —Page 271, The Reformed Church doth hold, that the Scripture is the only Rule of Faith.—Page 272, That every one hath the Right of his private Judgment.—That the Teachers of the Church ought not to be Dictators or Maſters of Mens Faith, but only to be Helpers of it, for they are not to make Religion, but to ſhew it.—That the Scripture is clear and full, and perſpicuous in all Things neceſſary, as to all Matters of Life and Practice.—Page 276, An implicit Faith in Men, or in the Church, this is Popery. We deal honeſtly with Men, for we

plainly

plainly declare to Men, that without Perſonal Holineſs they cannot ſee the Face of God.—Page 277, That all they who do agree in the main Points of Religion, may look upon themſelves as Members of the ſame Church, notwithſtanding any different Apprehenſions in other Matters, and this is a Principle of Peace and Charty, and this Knowledge tends to the Reconciliation of Men, and to make them to live together like Chriſtians, in Love and good Will. —Page 278, I will conclude all with that Saying of a great Schoolman, who ſpoke indifferently of the State of the Reformed and *Romiſh* Church; For Men to differ about Matters of particular Perſwaſion and Opinion, is not inconſiſtent with that imperfect State which we are in, whilſt in the Way to Heaven; when we come thither we ſhall be conſummated, and more fully harmonize; but to differ in Opinion is not repugnant to Peace in the Way, tho' the Difference ſhall be taken away when we come home." Now if it be otherwiſe with any Man that owns the Reform'd Profeſſion, he is *Popiſh* in the Proteſtant Profeſſion. For theſe are Matters wherein they of the Proteſtant Religion do agree; and if any Man queſtion any of theſe, he is ſo far *POPISH* in the Proteſtant Religion.

To conclude, I cannot but be intirely of this great Divine's Opinion, Page 258, That far better is Nature alone, take it as it is, than that Religion which is inſincere and falſe. I ſay it again, better Nature alone, tho' debaſed, abuſed and neglected, the very Refuſe of God's Creation, than that Religion, which is inſincere and falſe. For *Ariſtotle*, who is credible in Matters of Nature and Reaſon, hath obſerved, that

Man, by his Nature and Conſtitution, is a mild and gentle Creature, fitted for Converſe and delighting in it. Certainly, were I to take an Eſtimate of Chriſtianity, either from Popery or any of the groſs Superſtitions of the World, and the affected Modes of Perſons, I would return to Philoſophy again, and let Chriſtianity alone; "for Philoſophy, ſo far as it goes, is ſincere and true, and attains good Effects; it mollifies Mens Spirits, and rids them of ALL BARBARITY." What an alluring Deſcription is this of Philoſophy, truly ſo called! ſo glorious is it when thus conſidered, and attended with its proper and genuine Effects, that one is almoſt tempted at firſt View to think it hardly poſſible to be exceeded by any other Religion! 'tis ſo exquiſitely fitted to all the vaſt Variety of Circumſtances of human Creatures, view'd under the Denomination of reaſonable Beings! but be that as it will, no firſt Principle is more certain, than that all the intereſted Buſtle, and noiſy Boaſts of ſome worldly great Men, are all vain, and all in vain in Point of ſpiritual or true rational Happineſs, concerning the Excellence of Chriſtianity, whilſt they themſelves remain deſtitute of, at leaſt uninfluenced by, the plain, evident, certain Principles of Humanity. Thoſe Principles collectively taken, conſtitute what the Doctor calls Philoſophy; Philoſophy alone goes ſo far as to mollify Mens Spirits, and rid them of all Barbarity. As certainly then as Chriſtianity is more excellent than Philoſophy, and goes farther in all Things really excellent, ſo certainly he who has not attain'd to the mere Excellencies of Humanity, has no Part or Lot, Share in,

in, or Claim to, any of the more exalted, more ſublime and refined Excellencies, eſſential to Chriſtianity. The Man that can deliberately allow himſelf in the Practice of Barbarity towards Beings of his own Make and Species, is yet barbarous, he is not yet ſo much as cilviiz'd! much leſs is he chriſtianiz'd. Such an one, like the Fruit near the Lake *Aſphaltites*, bears a fair outward Aſpect, when the Taſte within is nauſeous and deteſtable. Of the Man, who from Conſideration and ſerious Reflection, is become a Practiticer of the amiable Virtues of Humanity, I conceive great Hopes. Such an one, certainly, cannot be far from the Kingdom of Heaven. With Regard to this Man, I cannot but follow the great Example of my Maſter, who, when the young Man in the Goſpel told him, he had ſtrictly regarded the Practice of the moral Duties he had been juſt inculcating, and withal aſked him, what lack I yet? He loved him. Virtue is intrinſically lovely, and never fails to diffuſe an irreſiſtible Attraction, and brilliant Amiableneſs over the Man, who with Propriety is denominated *virtuous*. But what was the Opinion of our Saviour at the ſame Time, concerning the *Scribes* and *Phariſees?* The Men who ſat in *Moſes* Seat, the Men who fail'd not to make *broad* their Philacteries, and as far as was in their Power, the Way to Heaven narrow; the Men who were by no Means chargable with vacating their Places in the Houſe of God, at the Seaſons appointed by a national Eſtabliſhment for the ſolemn Duty of public Prayer to Almighty God; no, no, herein they were conſtant enough, no Means they thought

were better adapted to accompliſh the ſole End they aim'd at, the Eſteem and Veneration of Men: For, as Chriſt himſelf tells us, They did all their Works to be ſeen of Men. What I ſay was Chriſt's Opinion of theſe? Why that, with all their worldly Wiſdom they were Fools, with all their Knowledge of *Moſes*'s Law they were blind Guides, and with all their ſervile Attendance on the Altar, and pompous Shew of Sanctity, they were Hypocrites; and with what Reaſons does Chriſt ſupport this his Opinion of them? Why, by ſhewing that they taught Men to content themſelves with the Shadow, and let ſlip the Subſtance; to reſt in Appearances, when they ſhould be ſolicitous about nothing but Reallities; and that they themſelves aim'd at nothing but their own worldly Pleaſure, Honour, and Profit, when they ſhould have devoted themſelves to the Good of others. Is Prayer to God a Fault? are long well compos'd public Prayers, where uſed with Sincerity, culpable? By no Means. But the Fault was their uſing public Prayers, yea, and even protracting them under an Appearance of more than ordinary Piety and Religion, when all was but Pretence, but conſummate Hypocriſy. But by your Worſhip's Leave, we will here a little cloſely enquire what all this Pretence, this ſanctified Art, this deteſtable Hypocriſy was calculated to obtain; and ſtrange, and almoſt incredible as it is, at firſt Sight, we find it to be what, on your Account, I bluſh to mention to you; (but Truth is nevertheleſs Truth, for that it is of the melancholly Species, and this Truth is Melancholly with a Witneſs.) It was *the devouring*

vouring Widows Houſes, and the *End* we find was proportionate to the *Means*. The barbarous Devourers of Widows Houſes here were to be devoured themſelves hereafter, with Flames more intenſe than thoſe which would ſeize on Perſons of the ſame Temper and Conduct, in Nations merely barbarous. "Wo unto you, *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, Hypocrites, for ye devour Widows Houſes, and for a Pretence make long Prayers; therefore, ye ſhall receive the greater Damnation." 'Tis very poſſible, Sir, that theſe barbarous Men, theſe Deſpiſers of mere Humanity, and Boaſters of extraordinary Religion, theſe hypocritical *Jews*, might then be capable of conſtruing the well intended Civil Laws of their Country in a bad Senſe, and by adhering to the Letter, defeat the primary Purpoſe, the great Intention, and very Spirit of the Law, with Impunity; which, not only among the *Jews*, but all civiliz'd Nations under Heaven, was, as evidently appears from the very Nature and Reaſon of Things, the Preſervation of their Property, and other natural Rights, not only to Widows, but to all Degrees of Perſons, as Members of the Community. So that tho' the Civil Law might by them be made to countenance ſuch their Barbarity towards Widows in particular, they themſelves are as particularly condemn'd by the Law of the Goſpel for it, and that from the very Mouth of its venerable Legiſlator. Now, if theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, Hypocrites, who ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, and would neither go in themſelves, not ſuffer them that were entring to go in; by their making long Prayers, for a Pretence

tence to devour Widows Houſes; by their compaſſing Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte, and when made, was by them then made two Fold more the Child of Hell than themſelves; by perverting the Order of Nature, in making great Things little and contemptible, and little Things great and venerable, to the utter Subverſion and Diſregard of the weightier Matters of the *Law*, *Judgment*, *Mercy* and *Faith*; by their ſtraining at a Knat and ſwallowing a Camel; and laſtly, by their putting a falſe, tho' ſpecious Poliſh on the Outſides of Things, whilſt they themſelves were within full of Extortion and Exceſs. If, I ſay, theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who were favour'd with an Advancement one Degree above mere Philoſophy, by the Revelation made to them by *Moſes*, were addreſſed by *Chriſt*, with this awful Queſtion, Ye Serpents, Ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye eſcape the Damnation of Hell? how will theſe viperous Chriſtians be addreſs'd, who have been favour'd with an Advancement a Degree above the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* themſelves, by the Revelation made to them by *Chriſt* himſelf, who are under even the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, guilty of any of the like Enormities? Is it to no Purpoſe, that God has favour'd Mankind with one Revelation upon another? Do all ſupernatural Revelations fail of having their proper Effects upon us? Why, Sir, what diſadvantagious Inferences to the Intereſts of our common Chriſtianity, will naturally be drawn from hence by the great Abettors of Philoſophy, and ſteady Adherents to the eſſential Principles of Humanity? If the Doctor could ſay, "Certainly

tainly were I to take an Eſtimate of Chriſtianity, either from Popery or any of the groſs Superſtitions of the World, and the affected Modes of Perſons; I would return to Philoſophy again, and let Chriſtianity alone, for Philoſophy, ſo far as it goes, is ſincere and true, and attains good Effects; it mollifies Mens Spirits, and rids them of all BARBARITY." Theſe Gentlemen will ſay, " Certainly, were we to take our Eſtimate of Chriſtianity not from Popery, ſo called by Proteſtants, nor the enthuſiaſtic and ſuperſtitious Claſſes of Chriſtians; but from the practical Humanity, and ſocial Virtues of the Generality of even your rational Proteſtants, your Chriſtians of Erudition, of Rank and Authority, profeſs'd Friends to Reaſon, and loud ſwelling Boaſters of a Refinement upon Reaſon and Philoſophy by divine Revelation, we would abide by Philoſophy, claſp it to our Hearts, and let Chriſtianity alone; for Philoſophy, ſo far as it goes, is ſincere and true, and attains good Effects; it mollifies Mens Spirits, and rids them of all Barbarity. But the Chriſtianity of even theſe vaunting rational Chriſtians, evidently hardens their Hearts, and if we may judge of the Tendency of their Principles by their Practice, it induces them to riſe in their Barbarity. 'Tis true, they profeſs Meekneſs and Humility, Gentleneſs and Affability; but when they come to exemplify theſe Virtues in their Lives, and have a Call to produce them to the obſerving World, by drawing them forth into Practice, they find Means to explain them all away; either they are to be zealous for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, which Faith

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is no where to be found pure and unadulterated, but with themſelves, or which is all one, in their Church, or elſe they are all of a ſudden influenced by an exceſſive Regard to Conſcience in punctually governing their Conduct by the Civil Law; which, according to their partial Explication of it, ſhall, like *Alexander* the Great, in his Attempts on the Kingdoms of the World, bear down and chace before it all, not only theſe boaſted Chriſtian Refinements on the Virtues proper to Humanity; but even thoſe original Virtues of Humanity themſelves.

Shall I here again place your Confiſcation of Siſter *Seagram*'s Goods, and my own perſonal Impriſonment in View before you, with all their ſeveral natural Aggravations, or ſhall I forbear? I could wiſh, for the Sake of our common Faith, and your own Reputation, you had never given Occaſion for drawing ſo monſtrous and ſhocking a Picture! A Chriſtian Magiſtrate confiſcating the Goods and impriſoning the Perſons of his fellow Chriſtians, for (when all Coverings and Colourings are fairly thrown aſide) worſhipping God according to their Conſciences, whilſt thoſe that were a Scandal to their Species by their wicked Works, were countenanced to interrupt, worry and abuſe them!

But let the Abettors of Reaſon and Philoſophy, make what Uſe they pleaſe of a Conduct ſo flagrantly prepoſterous, I would wiſh them not to condemn Chriſtianity on Account of the inconſiſtent Conduct of its pretended Votaries, or mere Profeſſors; but maturely weigh what Doctor *Whichcot* has offer'd to their Conſideration, after he has done ſuch manifeſt Juſtice to their own

own darling Schemes of Nature and Philoſophy. True, indeed, ſays the Doctor, it (*i. e.* Philoſophy) is ſhort of ſupernatural Revelation, and theſe Things the Princes of the World did not know, as we read, 1. *Cor.* ii, and xiv, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, that is, (according to the Senſe of the Text) they are known only by Revelation from God. Your Worſhip will here pleaſe to obſerve, how exactly the good Doctor ſo celebrated, and ſo juſtly, for a judicious Chriſtian, agrees in his Sentiments with the *Methodiſts*, whom your Chriſtianity has allow'd you to handle ſo roughly. They think God graciouſly diſtinguiſhes ſome by explaining to them the Meaning of the written Revelation, by an immediate inward Revelation of it to them. This is exactly the Sentiment of this great Divine, and which he proceeds to evince the Truth of thus, " For he, (that is St. *Paul)* there doth give an Account, that as no Man knows the Things of a Man, but the Spirit of a Man that is in him, ſo no Man knows the Things of God, but the Spirit of God; that is, the Reſults of the divine Will are not known, unleſs they are reveal'd by the Spirit of God; this is the true Meaning of this Text," and this is the true *Methodiſt* Doctrine, and which neither you, Sir, nor any of the Claſs of Magiſtrates, who approve of Force, as an Expedient proper to bring Chriſtians to be of one Mind, will ever be able, by any worldly Engines, to oblige them to relinquiſh. The Doctor proceeds, " And it is ill brought to prove, that a Man, in the Uſe of Reaſon, cannot underſtand ought that belongs to his Salvation, or the Senſe of any Text of Scripture; I am very confident

the

the Apoſtle never ſays nor means any ſuch Thing; but, as the Secrets of a Man are known only to the Man himſelf, till he doth reveal them, ſo the Secrets of God are known only to God, till God reveal them, and till then we are not charged with them, for negative Infidelity damns no Man.

And now, Sir, I muſt entreat you particularly to regard the remarkable Paragraph with which this worthy Divine here concludes his judicious Obſervations, nor would it, I conceive, be in the leaſt impertinent or improper, if you were to invite the Attention of your eccleſiaſtic Brethren likewiſe, who, together with you, formed the Triumvirate that in the Form of Law, occaſion'd us to ſuffer almoſt the Loſs of all Things, for conforming our Conduct, as we conceiv'd, to the Law of God; It is this—"But thoſe that are acted by the Spirit of Popery, do corrupt the Word of God, as the Apoſtle ſays, 2 *Cor.* ii. 17. They make the Word of God to ſerve Ends and Purpoſes; as the Apoſtle ſays, 2 *Peter* i. 3. They make Merchandize of the Word of God, and make Gain their Godlineſs, that is, they gain Power and Wealth, and live in Pomp. *Theſe are the Ingredients that make up their Religion.* Upon which I ſhall only beg Leave to obſerve, that had two ſuch truly Proteſtant Eccleſiaſticks as the good Doctor, ſat in Judgment with you in our Cauſe, Confiſcation of Goods, and Impriſonment, had been none of the Ingredients that would have form'd our Puniſhment, for conſcientiouſly adhering to *our* Religion.

But having been thus large in my Citations from Doctor *Whichcot*, I ſhall be obliged to contract

contract my design'd Citations from Bishop *Wilkins* to one, " Now the Design of Christianity being to promote the Good of Mankind, and the Peace of Societies, therefore doth the Doctrine of it so frequently insist upon those Kind of Virtues and Graces which are most conducible to this End, and therefore, upon all these Accounts, the Truth of the Doctrine will appear very evident, *viz.* That 'tis the Duty of Christians to give signal Testimonies of their Equity and Moderation, upon all Occasions of Difference and Contests with one another; there remains only one Objection to be briefly answer'd, 'tis this.

How may this consist with that Zeal and Strictness of Duty which we are obliged unto? To this it may be answer'd, 1st, That Zeal doth properly consist in an Intention of Mind, and Earnestness of Affection in the Prosecution of such Things as are our Duty, and in opposing such Things whereby we are hinder'd in the Performance of our Duty. Now supposing Moderation to be a Duty, a Man ought to be zealous for this Grace, and against all such Persons and Things as are Enemies and Hindrances of it, so that these Things are not opposite but consistent with and subservient to one another.

And as for that other Branch of the Objection, concerning Strictness and Exactness of Duty, from which a Man ought not to deviate out of Compliance with others.

To this it may be said, that Strictness is properly a keeping close to the Law. Now 'tis not the naked Letter but the Sense and Meaning that is the Law; and that Man may be said to be most strict in his Obedience, who doth most exactly comply with this. A Man may violate the

the Law by obſerving the Letter, and he may keep the Law by going againſt the Letter;" and, as I take it, there is nothing more pertinent to the preſent Occaſion, than this cogent Reaſoning of the Biſhop's, with Regard to the true Method of conſtruing the Civil Law, I ſhall leave it with your Worſhip to be the Subject of your more mature Conſideration in Futurity.

The pious Biſhop *Taylor*, *Lib. of Prop.* § 2. Part 12. ſays, "Now every Man that errs, tho' in a Matter of Conſequence, ſo long as the Foundation is entire, cannot be ſuſpected juſtly guilty of a Crime, to give his Error a Formality of Hereſy; for we may ſee many a good Man miſerably deceived, (as we ſhall make it appear afterwards) and he that is the beſt amongſt Men, certainly hath ſo much Humility to think he may be eaſily deceived, and twenty to one but he is in ſome Thing or other; yet, if his Error be not voluntary, and Part of an ill Life, then becauſe he lives a good Life, he is a good Man, and therefore no Heretic. No Man is a Heretic againſt his Will. And if it be pretended, that every Man that is deceiv'd is therefore proud, becauſe he doth not ſubmit his Underſtanding to the Authority of God or Man reſpectively, and ſo his Error becomes a Hereſy: To this I anſwer, That there is no Chriſtian Man but will ſubmit his Underſtanding to God, and believes whatſoever he hath ſaid; but always provided, he knows that God hath ſaid ſo, elſe he muſt do his Duty by his Readineſs to obey, when he ſhall know it. But for Obedience or Humility of the Underſtanding towards Men, that is a Thing of another

another Conſideration, and it muſt firſt be made evident, that his Underſtanding muſt be ſubmitted to Men; and who theſe Men are, muſt alſo be certain, before it will be adjudg'd a Sin not to ſubmit. But if I miſtake not *Chriſt*'s Saying, [call no Man Maſter upon Earth] is ſo great a Prejudice againſt this Pretence, as I doubt it will go near wholly to make it invalid. So that as the worſhipping of Angels is a Humility indeed, but is voluntary, and a Will-Worſhip to an ill Senſe, not to be excuſed by the Excellency of Humility, nor the Virtue of Religion; ſo is the relying upon the Judgment of Man an Humility too, but ſuch as comes not under that Obedience of Faith, which is the Duty of every Chriſtian; but intrenches upon that Duty which we owe to *Chriſt*, as an Acknowledgment that he is our great Maſter, and the Prince of the Catholic Church. But whether it be or be not, if that be the Queſtion, whether the diſagreeing Perſon be to be determin'd by the Dictates of Men, I am ſure the Dictates of Men muſt not determine him in that Queſtion, but it muſt be ſettled by ſome higher Principle: So that, if of that Queſtion the diſagreeing Perſon does opine, or believe, or err, *bona fide*, he is not therefore to be judg'd a Heretic, becauſe he ſubmits not his Underſtanding: For, till it be ſufficiently made certain to him, that he is bound to ſubmit, he may innocently and piouſly diſagree, and this not ſubmitting is therefore not a Crime, (and ſo cannot make a Hereſy) becauſe without a Crime he may lawfully doubt, whether he be bound to ſubmit or

no, for that's the Queſtion. And if in ſuch Queſtions which have Influence upon a whole Syſtem of Theology, a Man may doubt lawfully, if he doubts heartily, becauſe the Authority of Men being the Thing in Queſtion, cannot be the Judge of this Queſtion, and therefore being rejected, or which is all one, being queſtion'd, that is, not believ'd, cannot render the diſagreeing Perſon guilty of Pride, and by Conſequence, not of Hereſy, much more may particular Queſtions be doubted of, and the Authority of Men examin'd, and yet the doubting Perſon be humble enough, and therefore be no Heretic for all this Pretence. And it ſhould be conſidered, that Humility is a Duty in great ones as well as in Ideots, and as Inferiors muſt not diſagree without Reaſon, ſo neither muſt Superiors preſcribe to others without ſufficient Authority, Evidence and Neceſſity too; and if Rebellion be Pride, ſo is Tyranny; and it being *in materia intellectuali*, both may be guilty of Pride of Underſtanding, ſometimes the one in impoſing, ſometimes the other in a cauſeleſs Diſagreeing; but in the Inferiors, it is then only the Want of Humility, when the Guides impoſe or preſcribe what God hath alſo taught, and then it is the diſobeying God's Dictates, not Man's that makes the Sin; but then this Conſideration will alſo intervene, that as no Dictate of God obliges Men to believe it, unleſs I know it to be ſuch, ſo neither will any of the Dictates of my Superiors engage my Faith, unleſs I alſo know, or have no Reaſon to diſbelieve, but that they are warranted to teach them to me,

therefore, becauſe God hath taught the ſame to them, which if I once know, or have no Reaſon to think the contrary, if I diſagree, my Sin is not in reſiſting human Authority, but divine, and therefore the whole Buſineſs of ſubmitting our Underſtanding to human Authority comes to nothing; for either it reſolves into the direct Duty of ſubmitting to God, or if it be ſpoken of abſtractedly, it is no Duty at all.

But this Pretence of a Neceſſity of humbling the Underſtanding, is none of the meaneſt Arts whereby ſome Perſons have invaded, and uſurp'd a Power over Mens Faith and Conſciences, and therefore we ſhall examine the Pretence afterwards, and try if God hath inveſted any Man, or Company of Men, with ſuch a Power. In the mean Time, he that ſubmits his Underſtanding to all that he knows God hath ſaid, and is ready to ſubmit to all that he hath ſaid if he but know it, denying his own Affections and Ends, and Intereſts and human Perſwaſions, laying them all down at the Foot of his great Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, that Man hath brought his Underſtanding into Subjection, and every proud Thought unto the Obedience of Chriſt, and this is the Obedience of Faith, which is the Duty of a Chriſtian."

Extract of a Letter from the St. James's *Evening Poſt*, November 28, 1751. *Referred to Page* 22.

HEAR ALL YE PEOPLE.

PURE Religion is in its Nature moſt conducive to Mens Happineſs, by teaching them *to do Juſtice, love Mercy, and to walk humbly before God*; but the wicked Profeſſors of it in high Places, are the mortal Enemies of Man's Felicity, Peace and Liberty, by acting *unjuſtly* and *cruelly*, and *walking arrogantly, before God*. For an Inſtance of this, take the following true Relation of a Matter of Fact, lately done at a Town in one of the Weſtern Counties, where I am a Pariſhioner, and a Member of the eſtabliſh'd Church, and tho' no Friend to Superſtition

perſtition and Enthuſiaſm, I look upon thoſe that are, with an Eye of Pity and Compaſſion, when they join theſe to the Appearance of Peace and Piety.

In this Town lives the Widow of an Apothecary, who is a Member of the Church of *England*, but a Favourer of the Sect called *Methodiſts*; her Houſe is licenſed for diſſenting Teachers, upon which ſhe preſumed to admit a Methodiſt Teacher and Congregation to aſſemble in it: The P——— of the P—— is in the Commiſſion of the Peace, and being a pious and peaceable D—— e, permitted, if not, (as 'tis ſuſpected) employ'd, ſome irreligious Fellows to interrupt them in their Devotions; who ſo well executed their Truſt, that they actually aſſaulted the Teacher, and ſome Female Auditors; but the good Women, tho' Methodiſts, thought Self-defence juſtifiable, and in the Scuffle, one of the *pious Miſſionaries* had his Shirt torn, upon which he applied to the eccleſiaſtical Magiſtrate, who in Conjunction with, or rather by Means of, a Lay-Brother, committed the Women to *Bridewell*, and fined the Widow in the Penalty of 20*l* for ſuffering a Conventicle to be held in her Houſe, becauſe not licenſed to the Service of the Methodiſts. This poor Woman ſupported herſelf and two Infants by ſelling Drugs, all which, and her Houſhold Goods, were ſeized to pay the Fine, and ſhe and her Infants left to ſtarve.

A Judge of the Aſſize is always eſteem'd of Counſel for the Priſoner; this Magiſtrate might have inform'd this poor, innocent, perſecuted Widow, this harmleſs Lamb of his own Flock, whoſe very Relation to him entitled her to his Protection, that by the Statute of the 10th of *Anne*, Cap. 2. ſhe might have been exempted from the Penalty on Conventiclers, by taking the Oaths, and making the Declaration requiſite whilſt under Perſecution. A humane and impartial Magiſtrate would not only perhaps have done this, but have committed the Ruffian who firſt broke the Peace, in Caſe he had not found legal Bail, inſtead of the poor inoffenſive Women.

Whether the poor Widow and her Siſters have Law on their Side, or not, every good Chriſtian will deteſt the Conduct of this furious B——t, if as St. *James* ſays, *Pure Religion and undefiled before God, is to viſit the Widows and Fatherleſs in their Affliction, and to keep unſpotted from the World*; is not the Religion of that Man very *impure*, which ſtirs him up to afflict, oppreſs, and take away the Bread of the Widows and Fatherleſs, and who is ſpotted with the worſt of worldly Stains? What an impious Aſſurance muſt a Man have, who can look a Congregation in the Face, praying and prating of Religion, with ſolemn Gravity, as a Teacher of it, and practices the Reverſe of what Religion teaches, and this too for the Sake of Religion!

FINIS.

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